

creative
watercolor
techniques



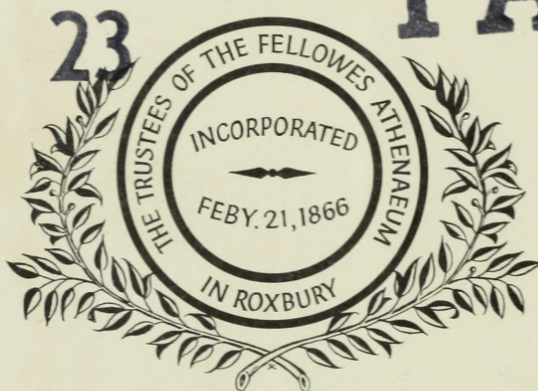
Yvonne du Moulin

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Creative Watercolor Techniques



Yvonne du Moulin

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Typeset by G.T. Setters Pty Limited
Printed in Hong Kong by Bookbuilders Ltd
Designed and produced by Kangaroo Press

This edition published in 1981 by
Van Nostrand Reinhold Company
135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020

Van Nostrand Reinhold Australia
17 Queen Street, Mitcham, Victoria 3132

Van Nostrand Reinhold Limited
1410 Birchmount Road, Scarborough,
Ontario M1P 2E7, Canada

Van Nostrand Reinhold Company Limited
Molly Millars Lane, Wokingham,
Berkshire RG11 2PY, England

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data:

du Moulin, Yvonne

Creative Watercolor Painting

Includes index

V. A. 1. Watercolor painting—Technique. I. Title.

ND2420.D85 751.42'2 81-12991

AACR2

ISBN 0-442-21876-1

Orig-8-24-82

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due to Ron Hogan and John Parkinson, my colleagues and friends of the Australian Watercolor Institute, whose friendly advice and untiring efforts have helped me so much. Thanks also to my son, John, who did most of the typing.

Dedication

To my grandfather, the late Conrad C. Dornbusch, who first inspired me to paint in watercolor.

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Introduction

It may be concluded that any art medium or material in which *water* is the mixing ingredient or agent for the colors or pigments is termed a watercolor or a painting or drawing in watercolor technique. It follows therefore, that P.V.A. (poly-vinylacetate), or vinyl-acrylic (tempera) colors, may also be termed watercolors, even though the total effect of these paints when dry may closely resemble that of oil paints applied very thickly with a palette knife or a brush. However, P.V.A. may be used in thin washes as in watercolor, or applied more thickly like poster color. Watercolor takes many forms, from the simplest pen-and-wash drawing, the wash consisting of thin and luminous areas of watercolor or watercolor inks applied over a drawing in ink, to the most elaborate watercolors with great tonal range and color harmonies.

Watercolor also includes powdered materials, used in opaque form, known as gouache. However, to most people, the term 'watercolor' brings to mind pale, luminous washes of color, sometimes along with a line drawing and sometimes without lineal form.

The object of this book is to show the scope and variety of watercolor and to help the serious student who wants to become proficient in this medium, to master the many facets of this exciting and largely spontaneous art, and to decide which of a number of watercolor techniques is most suited to his or her needs. I have always found that part of the fascination of this medium is the happy and unexpected little accidents which occur as the colors run and merge on the paper.

Drawing is a basic necessity of all art forms, whether or not a student intends to depict abstract subjects. Part of the process of becoming an artist is to learn drawing and draftsmanship, remembering that it is just as important to understand tree structure and tree anatomy as it is to understand the anatomy and structure of the human body. It must be remembered also that everything in nature has design, and that a picture without a design or plan, will look haphazard and unco-ordinated, and will be a source of disappointment.

This manual therefore, will be very helpful to those students who have studied drawing seriously and who have a working knowledge of perspective and an ability to set down a landscape or still life that is reasonably convincing and well composed. However sections on simple perspective, tree anatomy, and theory of tone have been included for the beginner.

However, each technique illustrated in this manual will be described step-by-step as simply as possible, and those students who have a natural affinity to, interest in, and ability in watercolor will achieve reasonable success in the process.

The main point that I am making is that you should *enjoy* painting in watercolors—success will follow, *particularly* if you have the ability to let yourself go. Most watercolor painters tend to be extroverts at heart, therefore dispensing with the nervous hesitancy and fussiness that often plagues the more introverted personalities. Remember that all art is *interpretation*, not slavish *imitation*!

Chapter 1

Materials-Guidelines for the Beginner

Papers

The surface on which watercolors may be painted are many and varied and include good-quality cartridge paper, rice papers (used in Japanese brush painting or *sumi*), lightweight watercolor papers (which must be stretched before use to prevent buckling) and heavy weight watercolor papers (which do *not* need stretching). Alternatively, watercolor board, which consists of watercolor paper mounted on cardboard, may be used.

As a general rule, the medium-textured or lighter weight papers are easier to handle, and therefore better for beginners. Some experience is necessary before using the heavier and more coarse-textured papers. I would advise any beginner to start with a large pad of good-quality cartridge paper. The surface is excellent for watercolor.

Paints

Watercolor paints and pigments are available in tubes (student- and artist-quality) and in pans; the color is ground or suspended in a water-soluble medium such as gum. As a general rule, tubes are preferable as they have more 'body' and are time-saving by being squeezed on to the saucers or plates ready to use *before* commencing the watercolor. With pans it is necessary while painting to keep mixing more color, which is a slow process. Pans in boxes should be used only for quick outdoor impressions, where there is no worry about mixing the colors.

Student-quality watercolors are less expensive and quite satisfactory.

Concentrated watercolor also comes in bottles, similar to ink containers, but is very expensive. See Appendix A for more detail.

Watercolor inks may be used instead of or in conjunction with watercolors in tubes and are fast and waterproof when dry. Black India ink and/or sepia ink may be used for a pen or brush outline (or added afterwards for accents).

Japanese ink used in *sumi* may be used in conjunction with ordinary watercolors. This ink comes in a block form and must be rubbed in a special dish with water to obtain the color. The dish or ink stone is called a *suzuri*. The *sumi*, or ink stick, is of three types distinguished by tints of brown, blue or gray. It consists of a water-soluble charcoal. The material is hand-pounded thousands of times into minute particles, then formed into sticks with fine glue.

Good *sumi* is labeled by the number of poundings it has received, the more the better. See Appendix A for more detail on this subject.

As a general rule, watercolor pigments and inks may be premixed in a dish or saucer, or mixed when applied to the surface of the watercolor paper. For beginners, a limited palette is preferable to too many colors.

Brushes

Many types of brushes may be used for watercolor, including those generally used for oils. Inexpensive thick brushes may be used for

applying large areas of wash or watercolor quickly. Large, flat brushes, normally used for household varnishing, are also quite satisfactory for putting down large areas of color.

Expensive sable-hair brushes are not necessary for the beginner. There is a large range of excellent synthetic hair brushes on the market, which are most satisfactory for general purposes. (A simple way to test whether a watercolor brush is a good one or not is to wet it and then bring it to a fine point in the mouth or with the fingers. This of course, is necessary only if a delicate, fine brush line is needed, not for large areas of color. If the brush tested does not come to a beautiful fine point, it is not a good one. This applies to both sable and synthetic brushes.)

Pens

Almost *any* type of pen may be used for a line drawing done in conjunction with watercolor. Mapping pens, felt-tip pens and architect's pens are excellent.

Quill and reed pens, both cut to the required nib shape by the artist, give a most varied, sympathetic, and exciting line. See pages 00 for more detail.

Felt pens may be used *over* watercolor, as the ink tends to wash off if the color is applied over the lines.

Music pen nibs, which make a series of parallel lines at one stroke, are also effective for gaining textural effects.

Other Materials

Charcoal sticks, cray-pas, watercolor pencils, wax crayons, oil pastels, and maskoid or masking fluid may all be used in conjunction with watercolor, and will be referred to in the following pages. If the following instructions are followed step-by-step, reasonable success will be achieved.

Basic List of Materials for Beginners

A large drawing book or pad of heavy duty cartridge paper or watercolor paper, about 20" × 40" (50 cm × 100 cm) or 14" × 10" (35 cm × 25 cm) (the largest size is preferable). Large sheets of heavy or light watercolor paper if preferred.

One large thick brush (need not be expensive or of best quality).

Pencils—one 4B and one 6B. Stick of charcoal (optional).

Small tubes of watercolor in the following colors: Yellow ochre, Chrome yellow, Olive green, Burnt sienna, Burnt umber, Prussian blue, Rose madder (Alizarin).

Any other colors of a personal choice but it is absolutely essential to have a red, a blue and a yellow.

Water Pot, Paint Rag, Small sponge for several large or small plates (plastic or china) for mixing colors.

Optional—if interested in *sumi* (Japanese ink painting and drawing), the necessary block of (mapping, biro, quill, etc.).

Optional—if interested in *sumi* Japanese ink painting and drawing), the necessary block of ink, with the dish in which to rub and mix the ink. It is not absolutely necessary to use the special bamboo handled Japanese brushes—a good quality watercolor brush with a *good point* will suffice.

To Stretch Watercolor Paper

Any watercolor paper lighter in weight than 300–400 lb (150–200 kg) may need to be stretched before use, as some of the lighter-weight or thinner papers tend to buckle when wet. Stretching the paper eliminates this problem, and the paper will dry completely flat.

The points to be remembered when stretching watercolor paper are as follows:

1. Soak the sheet of watercolor paper for 2 to 3 minutes in a bath or large flat dish similar to a photographic tray.
2. Pick up the paper carefully by one corner, and let the excess water drain away.
3. Place the paper carefully on a flat wooden board such as three-ply or Masonite.
4. Make sure that there are no air bubbles under the paper by smoothing the sheet carefully from the *center* out to the edges. Your hands should be completely clean.
5. Run gummed paper around the edged of the paper and tape to the board.
6. Let the paper dry thoroughly taped on the board; *do not* remove it until the watercolor is finished.
7. On completion of the watercolor, cut around the edges of the paper just inside the taped area, using a knife or razor blade, and lift the paper from the board.



Always stand brushes as above to stop damage to hairs

Chapter 2

Getting to Know the Medium

Warming-Up Exercises—Laying Down a Wash



1. Flat Wash

Mix sufficient paint for the whole wash, then take one brush-stroke right across the paper (left to right); then dip in the paint and take a second stroke below the first, dip in the paint and take a third stroke, and so on until the whole area is covered.

Do *not* add more water or paint to the mixture, as the wash will then result in uneven tonal areas, and will not finish up completely flat.

Use a broad, flat brush for large washes.



3. Granulation of Pigment (Granulated Wash)

To obtain granulation of certain pigments, the paper is tipped and tilted to allow the pigment to run into the hollows of the rough-grained paper; the bubble of paint must be kept moving with the brush. Granulation is not so pronounced on smoother papers. See Appendix A.

2. Graded Wash

A good quantity of watercolor must be mixed in a saucer, and proceed as in 1, except that a brush-full of water is added to the mixture with each stroke, resulting in the effect below.

Notice the paper texture and slight granulation, when the graded wash is applied to rough paper (below).



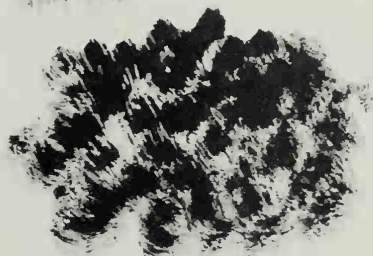
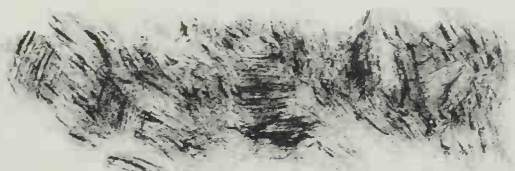
4. Lifting Colour from a Wet Wash with a Sponge

A *synthetic* sponge is damped, and wiped over certain areas of a wet wash to achieve soft effects in sky formations, etc. Organic sponges have too much texture for this purpose.



Warming-up exercises

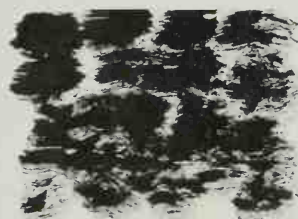
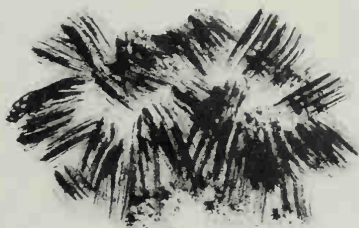
Practise your brush-strokes and your textures



Stippling



Brushes are capable of many variations of strokes—try new textures

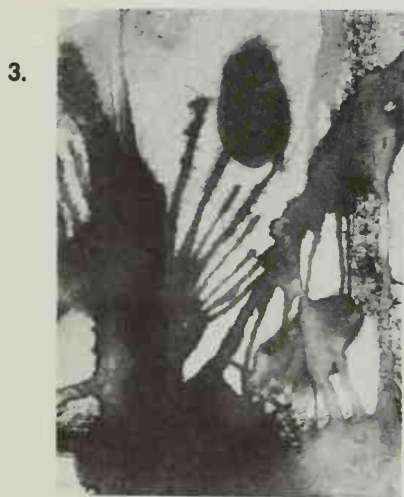
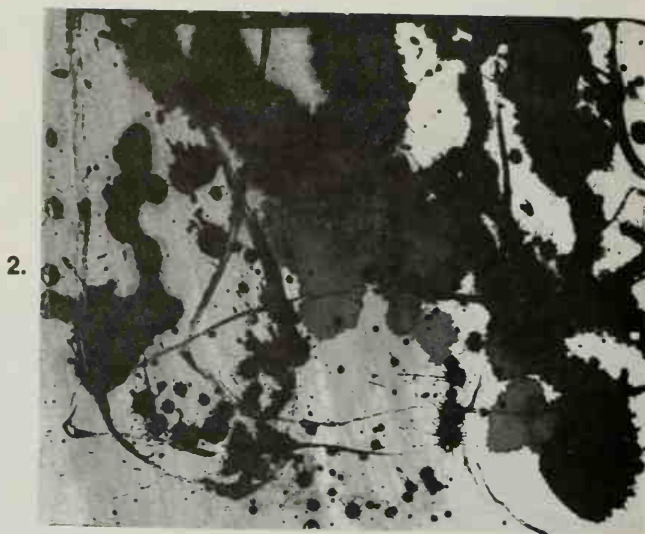


Strokes above made with No. 8 bristle brush, made in China

Not all students who attempt watercolors will be successful, for, unlike oil painting, watercolor is a more spontaneous medium and cannot be scraped down and worked over again and again. I must add, however, that it *is* possible to work over the surface of a watercolor to some

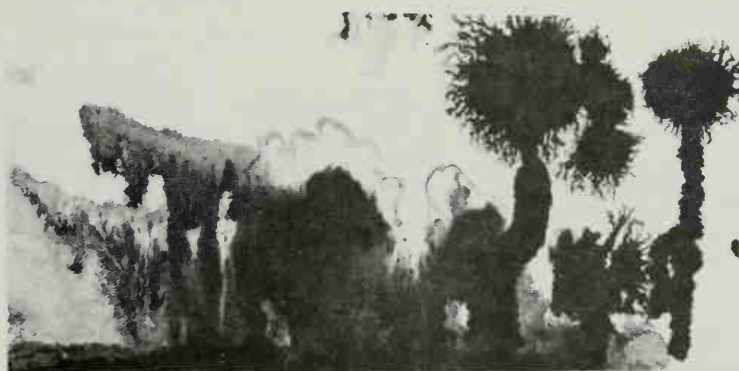
degree *if* a heavyweight watercolor paper or board has been used. In this case, a sponge or a scraper may be used to burr or lift the paper surface to bring up white highlights or to erase an area of color. The edge of a razorblade may be used for this purpose.

Exploiting Accidental Effects—Tachisme



1. Ink over watercolor, and paper tilted to make ink run.
2. Ink and watercolor flicked or splashed with large brush on to a colored background (damp surface).
3. Watercolor poured on to paper, then tilted and blown with a straw.
4. Ink splattered on to a colored ground with a toothbrush loaded with color, and flicked on to paper with fingers (dry ground).
5. Ink and paint thrown on to coloured ground with bristle brush (thick), or a toothbrush; while the ink and color is still wet pen lines are drawn freely over the surface.

Tachisme is the name that is given to this painting technique. It means paint thrown, dribbled or blown on to the painting surface.



With a little imagination, and a touch of a pen or a brush-line here and there, these accidental forms become weird tree-shapes. Blue-gray 'school' ink, which comes in small packets as powder, is mixed with water and dropped or brushed on to a very damp sheet of cartridge or watercolor paper.

Chapter 3

Tone

The Tonal Scale

If your knowledge and experience of the use of tone is not great, it may be easier to start in watercolor with black and white only. Here the white, at one end of the scale, is represented by the white paper. At the other end of the scale, black is the darkest tone, and between these two extremes there is an infinite gradation of grays, from the faint gray to a very dark gray, hardly distinguishable from black. This is the tonal scale, with its infinite range of subtle grays, but

for practical purposes it is easier to think in simpler terms. A simple tonal scale of five values, white, three grays and black is recommended for those who find a multitude of subtle tones too confusing at this stage. This is known as a percentage tonal scale—the middle gray would be 50%, and mid-way between the white paper and the middle gray would be a 25% light gray, and midway between the middle gray and the black would be a 75% dark gray.

You will find this method a completely workable one.



Color and Tonal Values

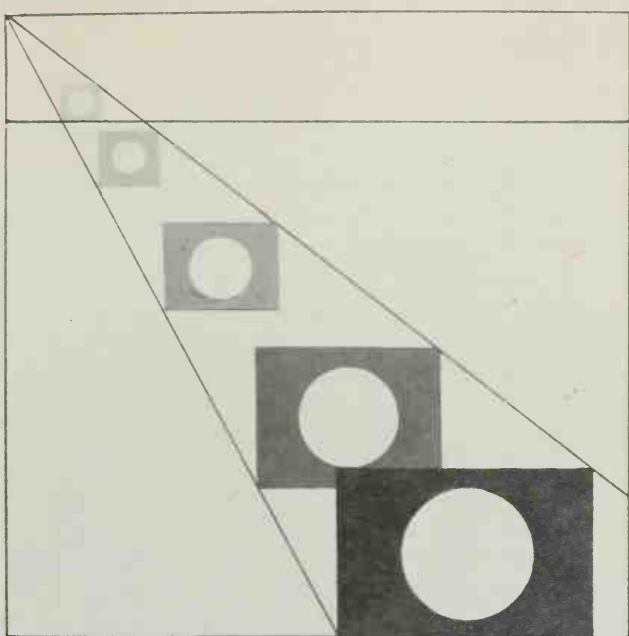
The outdoor watercolor painter is confronted by a world of color which he must express in terms of white, grays and black.

Mentally recalling the tonal scale helps to fix a color's lightness or darkness. Do not become easily discouraged by faulty tonal judgments—gradually the eye becomes experienced—and the main point to remember is that many people look and see but do *not* really observe nature. Making mental notes of tonal values wherever you go, will ultimately make you accomplished in this field—in the same way, observing everything in nature—trees, flowers, skies etc., will make you a better artist and one who has a

large mental library of knowledge, from which your work will benefit.

Tonal Values and Mood

Quite often the mood of a landscape may best be expressed by limiting it to a very small range of the tonal scale. This small range is called *close values*. Quite often the best approach is to cover the drawing with a wash in your key tone, and then work lighter and darker values into it. In this case the lighter values would be scraped out with a blade, or similar tool, (or lifted out with a sponge).



Tonal planes—diagram of distance planes in landscape



Early evening in a park

Close tones in nature—Market garden, evening



Chapter 4

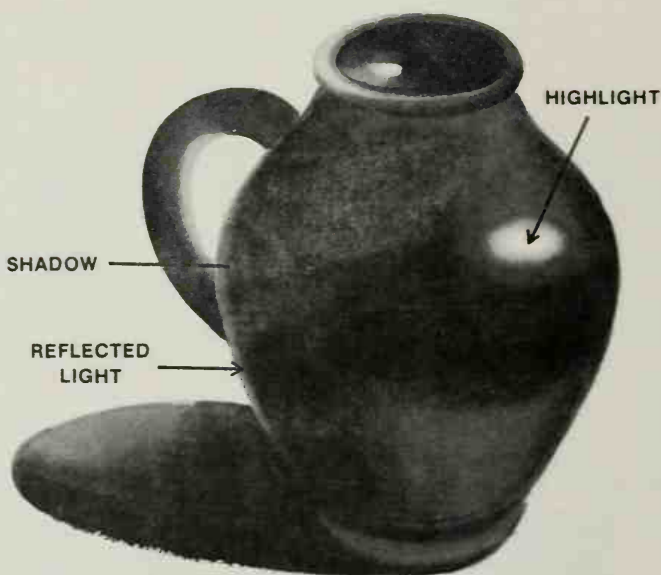
Light and Shadow

Highlight, Shadow and Reflected Light (Indoors)

Light upon an object produces shadows, highlights and reflected lights. Any object which obstructs rays of light produces *shadow* on those of its planes that are turned away from the light source; also, it creates a *cast shadow* of its shape upon whatever planes chance to be adjacent.

Also, surfaces in strong light tend to *reflect* some of that light to adjacent surfaces that are in shadow. These *reflected* lights are important in revealing the *solidity* of forms in shadow.

Curved surfaces, which have a high reflecting quality, (for example glass) culminate in a spot of maximum intensity of light, called a *highlight*.



Artificial light from a single source (right side) on a glazed pot, illustrating above text

The Shifting of Light (Outdoors)

Light may change or shift *indoors* as dusk comes, or the sun rises, but the most transforming powers of light may be seen as it moves across a

Early morning light

landscape. This phenomenon shows how a shift of light may alter the mood of a subject, sometimes almost magically making a dull subject interesting and unusual.



Reflection

When light falls on a surface made of different materials, a certain amount of light is reflected. Objects may be seen by this reflected light; for example, a book may appear red because it absorbs all colors in the spectrum of white light except red, which it reflects.

Mostly, the reflected light seems to be scattered fairly uniformly in all directions, but where the reflecting surface is polished or shiny, most of the light is reflected in one particular direction.

Thus in the case of white paper illuminated from above, it appears equally bright from all directions, whilst something like a mirror reflects the light in one particular direction; it appears much brighter from this one direction, even to the point of producing a detailed image of the source of light.

The Shadow Edge

The shadow edge is most important, for this is where light and shadow meet and mingle. Here, surfaces move in and out of the light. Sometimes there is a knife-like edge of demarcation, showing that a plane is sharply turning away from the light and sometimes the transition is smooth and gradual, indicating a rounded

surface. The shadow edge is particularly important in that it reveals so much *structural form*.

Texture

Here, too, the *textural quality* or *surface* of an object or objects may be revealed and depicted pictorially. Textural surface details may be just indicated, and not necessarily spread slavishly all over the surface of the object. Pictorial memory should be one of the artist's greatest assets. Continuous observation furnishes never ending material to sustain and inspire the artist in future paintings.

Here, mention of J.M.W. Turner, the famed British watercolorist, would be apt—his sketch-books were crammed with watercolor sketches and watercolor shorthand notes (skies, trees, atmospheric conditions etc.), which must have assisted in the building of his most considerable memory-bank. He was particularly renowned for his *atmospheric* watercolors and, even though he was a painter in oils also, it was in his watercolors that his greatest atmospheric feeling was evident.

Below, the same subject treated under different lighting conditions.



Strong frontal light

*Strong light from one side, and
textural qualities*

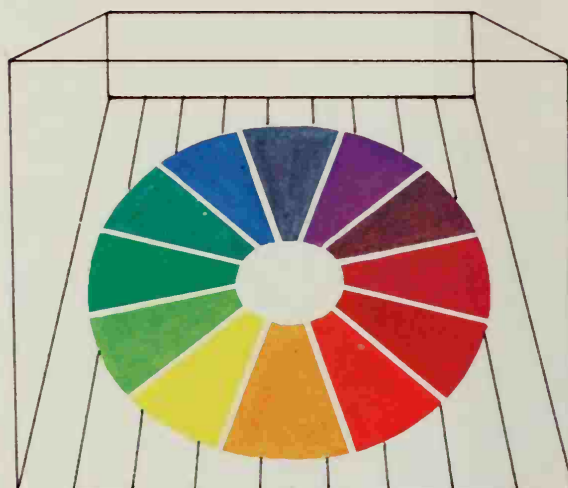
Evening light

Chapter 5

Chromatics—The Study of Color

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was thought essential that color should be pleasant and harmonious. The first new art movement of the twentieth century, however, thought otherwise. The Fauve period, which immediately followed Neoimpressionism, brought brilliant colors that shocked, irritated, and defied all the conventions; thus the artist colorist of modern times has become quite acceptable since then.

You will find, as you develop your ability in the field of watercolor, that to a certain degree you will develop a reasonable sense of color and color harmony also.



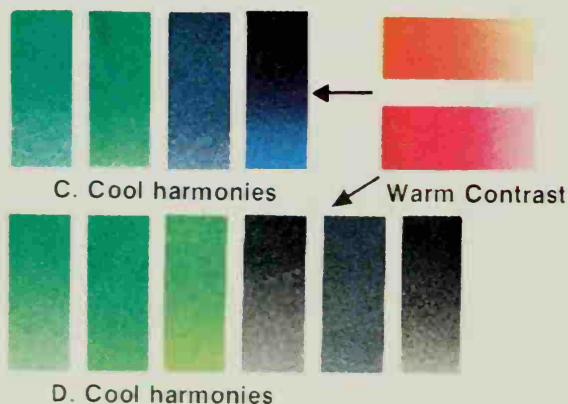
Color-receding diagram, showing which hues in their natural intensities seem to take relatively near or far positions in landscape

Harmonies in Color

A natural feeling for the 'poetry of color' is inherent in most students of art, and practice and experience will further develop this ability.

A and *B* are two color schemes in warm harmonies.

C and *D* are two color schemes in cool harmonies.



A. Warm harmonies



B. Warm harmonies

Cool Contrast

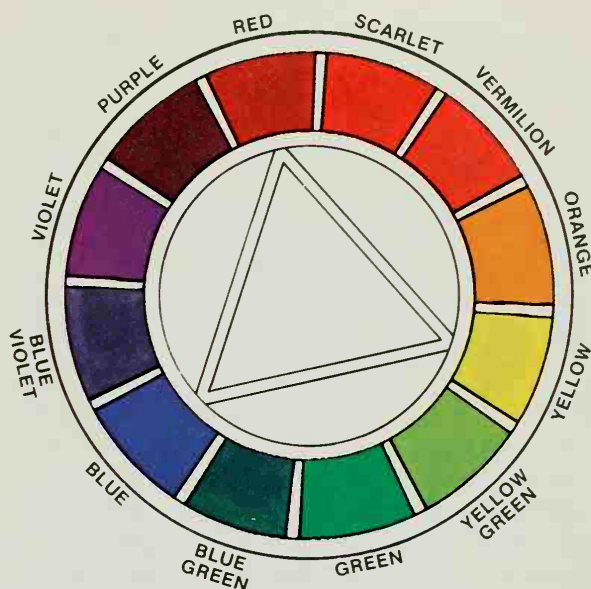
Each watercolor is washed down to its lightest tint or tone, showing the possible variations of each color, from light to dark. This is also called *gradation* of color.

A very limited color scheme, using a small range of *either* the warm *or* the cool harmonies, is preferable for the beginner in watercolor.

Chromatics: Complementary Colors

According to Ogden N. Rood (1831–1902), who was the author of *Modern Chromatics*, 'Any two colors, which, by their union, produce white light, are called *complementary*.'

It is not necessary, however, to research deeply here his scientific theories on color—a working knowledge of harmonies, warm and cool colors, contrasts and complementary colors, should suffice. Further reading and study on the science of color may be pursued, if you wish, whilst studying the various aspects and techniques of watercolor. Right, a simple complementary color wheel gives you the necessary background for the time being.



Complementary colors (arranged in a circle)

Contrast

If it is desired to produce a strong effect of contrast, the colored surfaces must be placed as close to each other as possible.

Below is a diagram, used by the French artist and scientific colorist Chevreul, to illustrate and demonstrate the laws of contrast.

- * Two colored strips are placed side by side in contact, whilst *duplicate* strips of color are arranged at some distance from each other.

A. **ultramarine** The tints of the two strips in
cerulean blue contact are both altered.

B. **ultramarine** Those placed at a greater
cerulean blue distance apart suffered no change.

The ultramarine in A appears more violet in hue, the cerulean blue in A appears more greenish.

Thus the following rule for contrast applies:

When two colored surfaces are placed in contiguity, each is changed as though it had been mixed to some extent with the *complementary* color of the other.

Ogden N. Rood

In the diagram (left), the ultramarine becomes more of a violet-blue, because it seems to be mixed with the complementary color of the cerulean blue; that is, with *orange*.

If you wish to experiment with pairs of colors in close proximity to one another, to gain the effects of the colors on one another, the procedure is most enjoyable, and adds to your knowledge of color, and to what may be called your 'library of color'.

The Small Interval and Gradation

We have seen that when two colors which are *nearly* identical are contrasted, each is made to appear less intense or saturated, because each color picks up some of the complementary color of its neighbour. We now come to colors which are *closely related* in the chromatic circle, that is, colors that are separated from each other by *small intervals*, i.e.

red/orange-red *orange-red/orange*
orange/orange-yellow *orange-yellow/yellow*

The first color of each pair (*italic*) is the darker, and is in reality the shade of its partner.

Also, the *lighter* colour of each pair carries the greater *luminosity*.

One of the commonest of these intervals (yellow, deepening into orange-yellow) occurs regularly in nature with sunsets, yellow flowers, and the subdued yellowish-browns of many natural objects in the landscape generally.

Thus colors at small intervals from one another pass into one another by gentle and imperceptible gradations, so that the artist cannot say where one ends, and the other begins. Thus colors which are nearly related *blend harmoniously* into one another and produce a subtle and satisfying effect.

One of the most important characteristics of color in nature is the endless, almost infinite gradation which always accompanies it. It is impossible to escape these delicate changes in color of all natural objects, owing to the way in which the light strikes them.

It is one of the tasks of the artist to ascertain the *causes* that give rise to the highly complex sensations which he experiences; those of light or luminosity, saturation of color, subtle gradations from light into shade, sunlight into shadow, etc. Thus his or her knowledge of the elements that go to make up chromatic sensations is most considerable compared to that of the ordinary person.

The ever-present gentle changes of color in nature bring to mind the richness and vastness of her resources. There is always something more to

see; and even where there is no conscious study of color, it still produces its effect on the mind of the beholder. Great satisfaction can be gained by just sitting and observing a landscape—try it, without even putting pen or brush to paper. The urge to transfer your sensations to paper will bring forth your creative abilities, and enable you enthusiastically to tackle the subject. If you are unhappy with the outcome, don't be daunted—try again! Success will follow if you are persistent.

Remember, determination to succeed is just as important for an artist as for an athlete.

Gradation with Pointillism, Divisionism, etc.

Here gradation is gained with a host of multi-colored dabs or strokes or dots placed one against another, to produce the desired effect of gradation from a distance.

Painters in such techniques were Signac, Seurat, Monet, Pissarro and others, who made their canvases glow and glimmer, communicating a soft and peculiar brilliancy, and giving an appearance of transparency.

The result of this blending of colors by the eye can best be seen in these paintings of the Neo-impressionists, who were obviously influenced by Chevreul, Turner and Delacroix.

St Peter's from the Tiber, Rome (tiny tonal watercolor)



Chapter 6

Watercolor Outdoors

Selection and Composition

Your first adventure in watercolor outdoors will be not a little confusing—you will be confronted by a bewildering and complex array of objects, colors and tonal values. No matter what the subject, the eye will be assaulted by a myriad procession of images. You are liable to feel overwhelmed by the great wealth of picture making material.

Somehow, out of all this confusion, *order* and *concentration* must be brought to bear upon the subject. Training and practice and self-discipline will eventually allow you to control and select *only* those elements necessary for the composition of your picture, ignoring and disregarding unnecessary and irrelevant details. A frequent mistake is in placing too much dependence upon the material at hand, and not enough on your ability to *transform* the material.

Remember—art is *interpretation* of nature and not slavish *imitation*. If one wishes to imitate only, a camera or colored slide does a far better job!

Therefore, the *first* problem with which the outdoor watercolorist has to cope is that of *composition*—that is, you must isolate a portion of the landscape, leaving out all non-essentials. This is very difficult for the uninitiated outdoor draftsman, and you will find the confusion of detail tends to bog you down. The answer is a viewfinder.

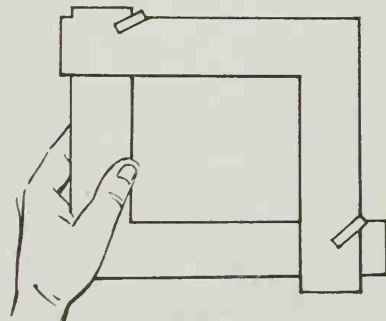
How to Make a Viewfinder

Cut a rectangle out of a sheet of card or stiff paper and hold the resulting frame before one



eye, with the other eye closed. This will frame a portion of the scene. If you wish to change the size and proportions of the opening, two pieces of L-shaped cardboard may be held together with paper clips, so as to leave an opening of adjustable size. Another quicker method is to hold the fingers of both hands joined together like binoculars in front of both eyes.

Eventually, with much practice, you will gain the ability to see the picture completed in your *mind* before the actual painting is begun. Its actual execution is then a formality.



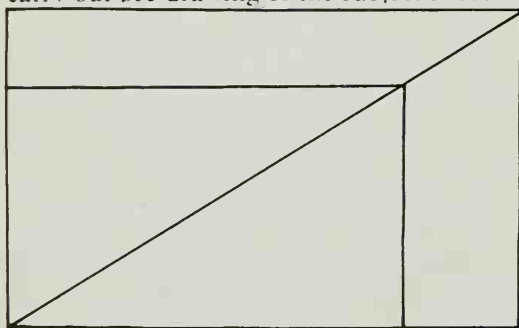
A viewfinder composed of two L-shaped pieces of cardboard, and held together with paper clips, making an opening which can be enlarged or reduced.

What to Take Along

My choice of materials to be used in quick outdoor sketches and notes for further use in completed watercolors indoors, is as follows:

A watercolor sketch pad, a box of pan watercolors, several large brushes (for broad washes)

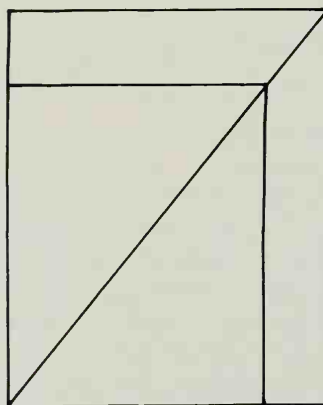
and several small ones, a large jar of clean water with a screw-top, a stick of charcoal or *soft* pencil (4B-6B) for broadly indicating the elements in the composition, a sponge, a paint rag for wiping the brushes and a suitable bag or basket in which to carry these materials. A camp-stool is optional. Personally, I prefer to sit on the ground, with my painting materials spread around me, (a light ground-sheet can be carried), and always use a basket in preference to a bag, as brushes are less likely to be damaged, and it is easier to take out and replace the materials. I also carry a bottle of sepia waterproof ink, and several pens, (quill, reed, etc.) with which to carry out pre-drawing of the subject chosen. An



alternative to the bottle of ink is an architect's black drawing pen, which is evenflowing, and will last a long time.

During bad weather it is possible to use your car as a mobile studio, and to sketch from within the car itself. However, unless it is raining, I prefer to be out in the open.

If it is intended to execute a finished watercolor rather than a quick sketch on the spot, tubes of watercolor will give more body and flow than the pans—and may be squeezed out onto large plastic plates (for lightness) before commencing the watercolor. The colors may be mixed in the centre of the plates.



To enlarge a picture in proportion simply take a diagonal through two corners

Depth in Landscape (Foreground, Middle Distance and Distance)

When a landscape you have chosen as a watercolor subject presents a vista of considerable depth (perhaps miles long to the distant horizon), you will perhaps have difficulty deciding how to depict so much space, crowded with so much detail. You must select and simplify drastically.

This is an old problem, and artists through the centuries have found that the concept of dividing a landscape in depth into three sectors, *foreground*, *middle distance* and *distance* has been most helpful. The names of these areas are self-explanatory and should not be considered as rigid enclosures, but flexible spaces dictated by

the subject matter. It is usual to depict these areas in diminishing tones, that is, the darkest tones in the foreground, the middle tones in the middle distance and the lightest in the far distance. See the diagram on page 15. Similarly the attention to detail would diminish from foreground to distance.

Also, shapes diminish with distance. Diminishing shapes may be depicted by sharply diminishing perspective lines, such as a road, or a line of trees, or a wall. These examples convey the feeling of distance.

The middle distance is often an interesting focal point in a picture, as illustrated below.

With practice, you will create a centre of interest or focal point of interest, in each of your pictures.



1. *Middle distance as an interesting focal point*



2. *Foreground as an interesting focal point*

Strong Sunlight

You may find when facing problems of strong sunlight in a landscape, that it is helpful, except for a few white paper highlights, to brush a warm yellow wash of color completely over the picture surface first. In recording the brilliant effects of strong sunlight, another method is to tone the dramatic shadow areas first, particularly where architectural subjects are featured.

Sometimes a guide sketch or pre-workout for the finished picture in monotone (tones of one color) is helpful and advisable, particularly as the areas of sunlight and shadow may change rather rapidly. Great contrasts in tonal values may add dramatic effect to your subject, and make the difference between a mediocre and a lively, interesting watercolor.



Strong sunlight .

Close Tones in Nature

In contrast to the effects of strong sunlight is the subtle tonal range needed to depict your landscape under misty or rainy conditions, or any other low-keyed relationships in nature. These are known as close tones in nature.

A helpful suggestion for your misty or rainy

landscape subject in a mid-tone wash of gray all over the paper, picking out of any light areas with a razor blade or similar tool, then working in the darker subtle tones of the foreground last of all. Sometimes, a sharp silhouette of a roof, tree or building, in almost black tones, will add drama to the foreground or middle distance of the picture.



Close tones in nature

Gray winter landscape, Dural

Chapter 7

Trees and Foliage



Root form growing from rock ledge

When commencing your serious studies of tree forms, do not make the mistake of imitating mechanically the shapes you see in front of you—remember that a tree has tension, that the roots flow into the ground, and do not abruptly halt at grass level, that each branch flows into the trunk of the tree, and is not just tagged onto it. You must observe and feel the stress and tension running through the tree, and in turn you must draw and paint with feeling and imagination. The most successful artists are those who are able to transfer emotional content into their work: without this quality a painting is dead, and so the personality of an artist is most important.

A tree being blown about violently in strong wind will look entirely different from a tree in a tranquil setting. Animation in forms of nature are most important. Allow your feeling and imagination free play.

Tree Anatomy

A tree has anatomical form, just as the human body does and constant drawing practice in tree forms will soon make you competent and self-confident in this field. The winter months are ideal for studying many tree forms, when leaves may be fewer, or absent altogether and the essential framework of the tree is exposed to you. Besides there is a certain amount of perspective in the drawing of tree forms—those branches which come toward you, or those receding from you, can cause problems in drawing and foreshortening. Each species of tree has individual

characteristics, and the character of each discloses the reasons for the green shapes that will begin to clothe it in the spring. You will soon learn where to look for those revealing glimpses of the framework in the chinks between the masses of green foliage, and your anatomical knowledge will keep on increasing with practice. Always paint your trees in a stimulating and imaginative way, suggest detail, and do not slavishly imitate every item before you.

Your tree is liable to express itself as a growing organism more readily if drawn as it grows from the earth upwards and outward. It is preferable to draw the trunk first therefore, with an upward thrust then let the larger boughs flow from the tree trunk, breaking into smaller branches and more slender twigs as they go. This must all be done lightly and suggestively, not in elaborate detail, unless making preparatory working drawings only, or painting in watercolor where *line* is the main feature in defining the objects in your picture. (See illustration 'The Pine Tree')

Eroded root formation growing on beach





The pine tree

Depicting Foliage and Form

When faced with the problem of large areas of foliage on a tree (or trees) think in terms of a large cape or mantle thrown over the tree branches and covering the tree, or portions of the tree. This green hanging mantle of foliage is without the sharp edges and definition of the branches—it is far more subtle, and, therefore, harder to define. It is elusive and shifts its shape with the slightest breeze.

Certain growing conditions may cause a tree to vary the traditional shape of its species—these conditions may include poor soil and nutrition, strong prevailing winds, or crowding with other trees.

Foliage masses come in infinite variety and

their pictorial possibilities are limitless. You will not be able to depict every leaf form on a tree so therefore generalization will be necessary. It is usual to convey the feeling of leaf shape and characteristics by adding small areas of texture here and there on the foliage, thus the texture of leaves of a plane tree will vary greatly from that of a pine and that of a willow tree from that of an apple tree.

Use your own conventions for masses of leafy foliage, keeping in mind the *basic leaf shape* of each species—suggestion and imagination will do the rest.

Study Dufy's pen and brush drawings of foliage.

An architect's pen gives a sympathetic line for the delicate edges of foliage.

Variations in shape and mass in foliage. Each species has a distinctive foliage and texture, and form is important.



LANIER OAK



POPLAR



WILLOW



FIR (BALSAM)

Series of Trees, Showing Textural Qualities

There is often great temptation to draw foliage leaf by leaf, this should only be done in a small section in order to draw and study at close quarters the essential shape and structure of leafy mass. This detailed knowledge should be

mentally filed away for future use. Careful delineation of characteristic leaf shapes, singly and in clumps with details of their attachments to twig and branch, are essential preparations for a thorough command of tree forms.



Plane Tree



Sugar Maple



Laurel



Pine



Willow



Quaking Aspen (Poplar family)

An architect's pen gives a sympathetic line for the delicate edges of foliage.

1. Basic *shape* of tree mass (foliage).
2. *Form* of foliage masses + movement.
3. Delicate, soft edges of leafy masses.

These are the *three* most important points to remember when depicting foliage.



Drawing squared for enlargement

Shape, texture and form of leaves vary with species.

Practice making leaf prints to become better acquainted with leaf structure and leaf anatomy. Brush fairly thick (tube) water-color mixture onto the veined sides of leaves—then press down onto paper and print.



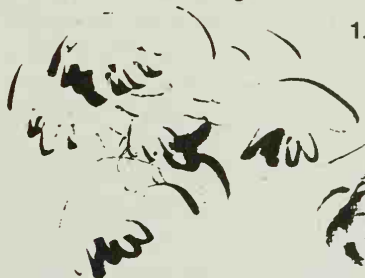
Use your own conventions for masses of leafy foliage, keeping in mind the *basic leaf shape* of each species—suggestion and imagination will do the rest.

Study Dufy's pen and brush drawings of foliage.

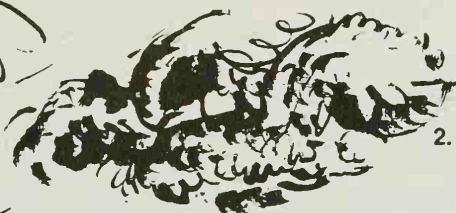


Pen textures in foliage

1. Quill pen



2. Reed pen combined with felt



3. Music pen



4. Post office nib



5. Brush line and ink with pen



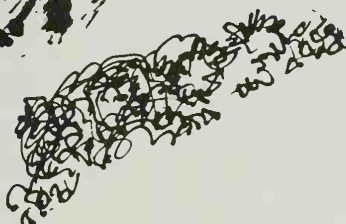
6. Felt pen (medium size)



7. Reed system splayed and dipped in ink



8. Architect's pen (Artline superfine line)



Experiment with these lines in conjunction with watercolor or watercolor inks.

Combine several types of lines as textural features in your watercolor.

Try drawing with line *first*.

Try adding line accents after completing your picture.

Try line added to *wet* watercolor surfaces.

Try a *brush* line on wet surface.

Try adding *brush* textures to line textures in finished watercolor.

Study Dufy's line drawings.

Try using watercolor with all these combinations.

Study Van Gogh's textural pen drawings of landscape subjects. Notice the expressionism and animation in his cypress trees.

Light on Foliage

A mass of foliage does not normally act as a strong reflecting surface, but tends to absorb light. Its gradations of tone are more often subtle than of deep contrast. But foliage has form—it obeys the law of gravity, and hangs or springs from a support. It is seldom a thin screen but exists in depth. It has few sharp edges, but has definite boundaries. Light playing over any foliage mass should be studied carefully. The shadows underneath and of one leaf mass upon another should be studied carefully, as should the shadow of the foliage masses on the trunk of the tree, and on the ground. All help in conveying

the structure of the tree. By emphasizing the character of the foliage edges the feeling of leaf texture may be conveyed, particularly where a leafy mass reveals its edge by a shadow, or by contrast against another background. The edge of a tree against the sky is usually sharp and revealing, and will often convey the character and form of a tree's foliage area. Also important are the foliage holes common in most trees, through which we may glimpse sky or sunlight. One subject, studied under different light conditions may alter a picture completely—for example, morning light, overhead sun at mid-day, and subtle, softening glow at night. Each alters a picture completely.



Strange rock formation

Other Forms in Nature—Grasses, Flowers, Weeds, Rocks, etc.

These more modest growth forms offer an entire world of picture making—a small, intimate entrancing world often overlooked in a search for the dramatic and grandiose. This material is particularly useful and appropriate to the foreground, which is often neglected and without adequate care and thought. Tall dramatic weeds and grasses in front of a crumbling old shed or barn can be the making of a picture. Here they become one of the most important elements in the composition, enlarged and carefully delineated. In this way, a foreground which is weak and uninteresting may become meaningful and believable. The principles of selection and emphasis should operate here allowing descriptive detail in certain areas, and blending into broadly rendered calligraphy suggesting more detail throughout the foreground area.

Constant practice in drawing and studying these small forms in nature will pay off in many ways, and add to your artistic memory bank for the future.

Drawing Rocks

Rock formations often show clear strata indications. These, together with the shadow areas, will help in gaining a third dimensional effect and then, automatically, a feeling of weight is emphasized.

Rock textures are most important to the artist. Rocks are eroded by sand and sea, split by frosts, and grown over by countless green growing forms. Coverings of lichens and mosses, dark bands of tidal marks, the growth around the bases of great boulders, and the *embedded* look of many of them give the feeling of immense foundations beneath the earth. Watercolor used with line technique is a useful way of conveying the various textures in rocks.



Bush fire aftermath, burnt tree stump and new growth

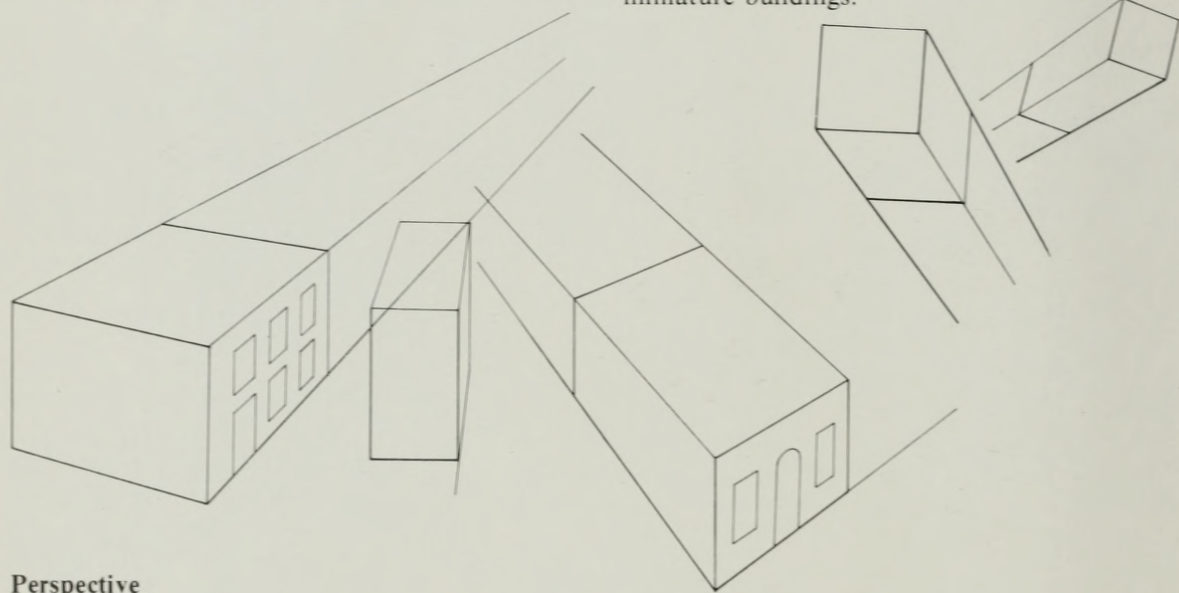
Chapter 8

Perspective and Buildings

When confronted with the drawing and painting of buildings, you become immediately involved with the *cube*. This simple and basic form dominates the shape of most buildings. Even though buildings may be designed in the widest variety of shapes, some quite fantastic, they are still variations of simple geometric forms and the cube is by far the most common of them. So, with architecture, you begin by thinking in terms of the cube. Some basic knowledge of perspective will become necessary, and the basic principles of the traditional perspective of the cube are not difficult to understand.

Approaching Perspective Through Box Forms

It is very easy to understand the cube (or near cube) form by having the actual form to handle and to draw from all angles. Cardboard boxes are ideal, and are readily available, although seldom found in perfect cubes. In fact, any box-like shape will suffice. A number of these boxes of various sizes can be combined in many ways, and utilized to simulate a collection of buildings, or one elaborate building. Windows and doors may be drawn on the sides to create an illusion of miniature buildings.



Perspective

Think of buildings as scattered boxes, or box-like forms.

IMPORTANT: remember that all lines *below* your eye-level will run *up* to the horizon line (A),

whilst all lines *above* your eye-level will run *down* (B). Perspective becomes more simple when you keep this important point in mind.



Perspective drawing looking down a steep hill

Objects in Depth

To the human eye, objects at a distance appear smaller than the same sized object immediately in front of us. This is the foundation on which the science of perspective is built. Thus, the road stretching before us into the distance seems to grow more narrow, and a row of identical trees or houses diminishes in size as it recedes from us. In this way we experience perspective in every aspect of our lives—it is with us all the time. By utilizing the science of perspective, artists, architects, draftsmen and others are able to translate their observations of our three dimensional world into two dimensional drawings.

Perspective is the law governing the rate at which a given object (or objects) diminishes in the distance. this perspective law begins by assuming that an imaginary horizon line (*the horizon*) cuts across the projected view at the level of the artist's eye. You will find yourself looking down upon those planes which lie below the horizon, and up to those which are above your horizon line or eye level. When we see

objects of equal size receding from us, lines drawn through their bases and tops slant up and down to a point upon the horizon, called a *vanishing point*. The heights of the receding objects will be defined by the converging bottom and top lines.

Finding the Horizon Line

The easiest way in which you may find the horizon line in a landscape, is to hold a ruler, pen or pencil horizontally in front of your eyes, (at arms length). Wherever your pen etc. cuts your view horizontally at eye level, will be your horizon line on which will be found your vanishing point or points.

One Point Perspective

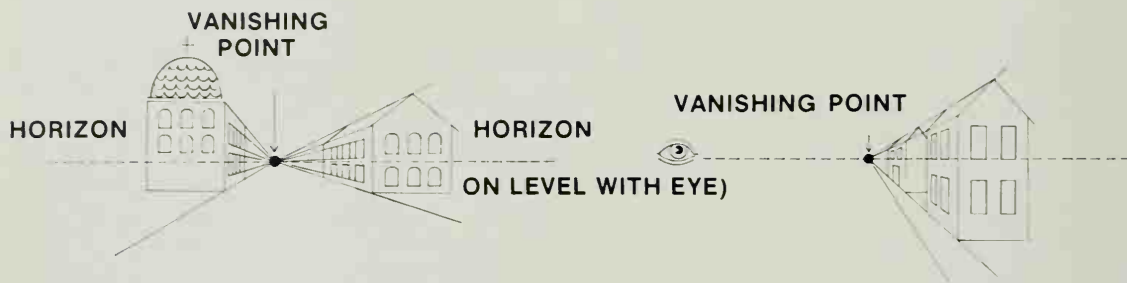
The principles I have mentioned above—horizons, vanishing lines and vanishing points—

are used in the two major categories of perspective: one point and two point perspective.

One point is the simplest of the two and is used when a building, or group of buildings, runs parallel to the plane of the picture, (the picture plane or the surface upon which you draw). That is, the building *fronts* do not recede, as they are

parallel to the plane of the drawing. Only the side dimensions recede to a common vanishing point, as shown in the diagram below.

Here the vanishing lines of the street and the houses meet at the vanishing point on the horizon, (a common vanishing point).



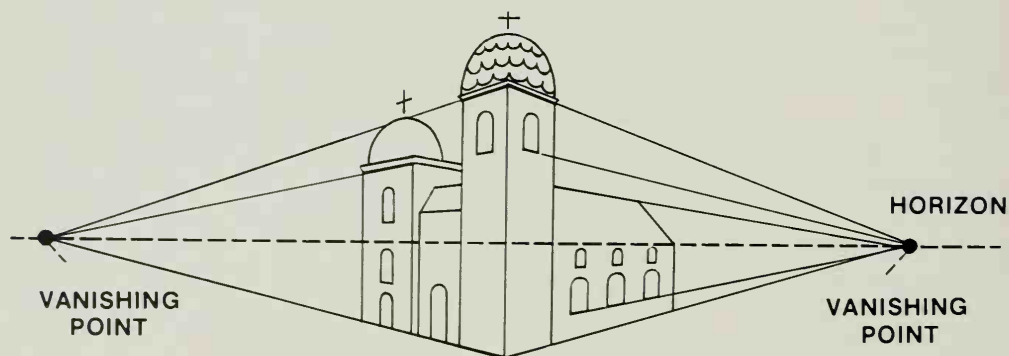
One point perspective

Two Point Perspective

Two point perspective becomes necessary when a building is at an angle with our plane of vision (the plane of the picture). In this case, *both* sides of the building recede, each to its own vanishing point, but on the same horizon. If the building is placed so that the two sides recede at the same

angle, the vanishing points on either side will be equidistant from the corner that faces us. See diagram below.

N.B. The more sharply a side recedes the less you will see of it, and the vanishing point will be closer to that corner. Similarly, the less sharply a side recedes the farther out the vanishing point will be from the corner.



Two point perspective

Vanishing points which are *not* equidistant from the corner facing us.



Perspective on the spot

Summing up, therefore, when you go out to tackle your first landscape with the problems of perspective, remember a few simple points:

First, find that imaginary horizon line. Holding a pencil horizontally before your eyes, at arms length, you find out where it cuts across your buildings and the adjacent areas. Then, holding the pencil at an angle to coincide with the downward slant of a roof line, or an upper tier of windows, you decide where that line would intersect your horizon. This should be your vanishing point. In the same way, you get your pencil to coincide with a principal up-slanting line, perhaps the foundations, or a lower course of masonry. The appraisals are not absolutely accurate but they are near enough, and constant training of your eye, and practice in drawing, will greatly improve your accuracy and with approximate vanishing points and a horizon you have a framework upon which to build your drawing.

Start with a simple building, then study more elaborate ones closely for their *basic forms* and leave out all unnecessary detail. Detail may be added later, after the basic fundamental forms have been drawn.

Indoors, The Perspective Framework

Upon moving indoors, you will find that the basic cube form is still with you. Now you are viewing the cube from the inside rather than the outside. The simple geometry of the cube will govern most of your indoor drawings.

The floor becomes the base of your indoor cube forms, whilst the ceiling is the top. The horizon line is established in the same way (as if

you were out of doors), and the down-slanting lines of the ceiling and the up-slanting lines of the floor give you the vanishing points. Some vanishing points will occur completely off the drawing paper, and must therefore be imagined. Furniture placed against walls, or aligned parallel to them will obey the same vanishing point as the walls. When furniture is placed at *different* angles to the walls, each piece must have a separate set of vanishing lines.

N.B. Indoors, you are viewing the cube from the *inside*, instead of the *outside*. In these diagrams you are looking towards the far walls. Both direct, and indirect light may play an important part as interesting sources of light from windows and doors. A bar of bright sunlight or evening glow across a table may transform an ordinary interior into an exceptional picture.



A convict cell or dungeon drawn from the inside (an interesting subject for lighting and unusual angles)

Chapter 9

Interpreting Water



Barges on the Tiber, Rome

Water offers enticing possibilities to the artist. Water is capable of moods, and is often baffling to depict. It is a capricious mirror, with a surface over-responsive to the slightest air current. Points needing consideration include local color, reflections, currents, surface agitations, and sometimes underwater colors and shapes visible in shallow areas.

Local Color

Normally, water is translucent, permitting the eye to penetrate to a certain degree. It is often colorless, its frequent colorations of blue, green, and grays being due to reflections. Under certain conditions, however, it possesses strong local color, as in the reds, browns and yellows of mud-laden flood waters.

Local color tends to darken the tone of water masses.

Reflections

The sky repeats itself in the waters below, and imprints its colors and shapes on that surface. Other forms which reflect themselves in the water include boats and other floating objects, and shorelines generally. In still water, objects reflect themselves without distortion, but upside down. The reflections are situated directly under the object reflected. Objects directly at the shore's edge will reflect in entirety, but objects further away from the shore will only reflect in part, or not at all.

It is unusual for the water to be absolutely calm. The surface of the water is more likely to be broken by currents or wind ripples, which fragment a reflected image, distort its form, or perhaps obliterate it entirely. The zigzagging contours of a reflected object in moving water are made use of by the artist to convey the restless, palpitating quality of water. The over-shifting shapes of water reflections are fascinating and tantalizing to most artists.

Currents and tides are among the great rhythms of nature, and the artist learns to utilize these rhythms in his compositions.

Surface Agitations

Water is very sensitive to wind, and the least breath ruffles its smoothness. A stiff breeze can turn a water area into thousands of little wavelets or white horses, reflecting sparkles of sunlight. This brilliant dancing effect has been pictured by countless artists. Often these reflecting wavelets are approximately the same size, although they diminish as they recede in the distance. Crescent shaped textural areas may be delineated here and there on the water surface, and convey the feeling of shimmering dancing rippling water. See illustrations, using block-out materials—coastal subjects with waves—in chapter on techniques.

White-capped and breaking waves are both dramatic forms that challenge the ingenuity of the artist. The only device that can freeze the wave in action is the camera, and good use should be made of it by all artists, to create a reference storehouse of wave sequences. The

draftsman must look with alert sensitivity, and stock his memory bank too. Use your camera creatively, it is one of your best means of studying motion.

Warming-Up Exercises—Quick Sketching

Small watercolor brush

Try different ways of expressing wind-blown reed forms. Try quick pen sketches—then quick brush lines impressions, with diluted ink.

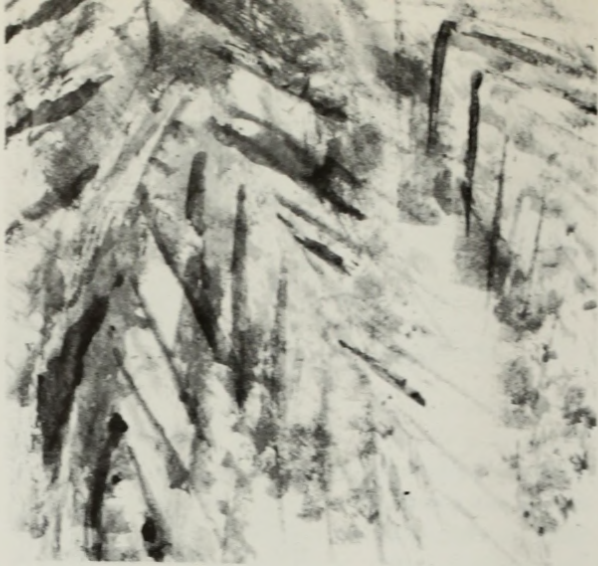
Large reed was sketched with an architect's pen, then blue-gray ink wash; finally felt-pen accents.



Reed head from river or lakeside

Sumi brush

A wedge of cardboard, folded, and dipped in Prussian blue watercolor



Sketch (using a very fine architect's pen, felt-tipped pen, and wash of blue-gray ink). Suggested foreground material, dandelions.

Texture used for palm foliage





Keep a selection of wheat heads, dried grass heads, river reed tops, etc., standing in a jar or container for constant reference.

Continue to draw every plant form available.

Chapter 10

Skies—The Moods of Nature

The sky, arched over earth, rocks, and water, sets the lighting key for every landscape. It is the key to the time of day and the kind of weather. From it emanates sunlight, moonlight, or enveloping darkness. The artist must look to the sky for instructions regarding the moods of nature—and will thus be able to read its message.

Varying conditions. To read the skies and land *only* in fine weather is to leave yourself with a very limited repertoire indeed.

Clouds and Basic Cloud Forms

Skies may be expanses of blue or gray only, but the area is often broken by a variety of cloud forms. Constant practice and observation will help you capture these elusive forms on paper. To embark on a series of cloud studies is helpful; these may be done in charcoal quickly, and fixative sprayed on. Unusual cloud effects may be captured quickly in this way, and stored for later use in a landscape.

In spite of the great variety of cloud forms, they follow certain basic patterns, and it is helpful to know about them. There are two basic types that differ from each other in the way they are formed. The *cumulus* clouds are formed by rising air currents producing fluffy, puffy, rounded, piled-up masses. On the other hand, the *stratus* clouds are layered, sheetlike, vertical masses formed when layers of air are cooled below the saturation point.

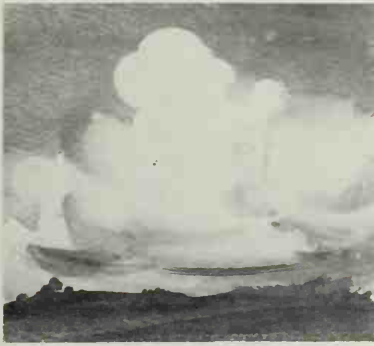
Cirrus clouds are composed of thin, wispy brushlike forms. They are a high altitude cloud formation often called mares' tails.



Skies—one subject, two moods in nature

The *cumulus* clouds are usually found on warm summer days banked in great billows against a blue sky. They mount higher and higher throughout the day, as the warm air currents rise up from the earth below. As they mount higher, conditions may cause them to discharge their moisture content. The top may flatten out like an anvilhead—the sun may be blotted out. Greyness covers the sky and the earth, and lightning and thunder precede a violent storm. The benign *cumulus* now becomes the menacing *cumulonimbus* thunderhead.

Stratus clouds spread across the sky in a low-hanging sheet or blanket, often leaden and threatening; when they become dark and have a heavy wet look, they are called *nimbostratus* and these are the true rain clouds. From a distance, blurring streaks of rain often extend to the ground interspersed with gleams of greenish or saffron colored light. Cloud forms should be used to enhance and dramatize your pictures.



A. *Cumulus*



B. *Stratus*



C. *Cirrus*

Skies in Experience and Memory

Hopefully, when you are face to face with nature, and have found a suitable landscape subject, you will find a sky that fulfils all your pictorial needs. If the sky is not adequate, freely contribute the necessary elements from your own creative resources in your quick notations, or your memory bank. You are creatively restricted if you depend only on the material that faces you. Your observation should have enriched your memory, so put your creative initiative to use. Draw upon your memory bank as it should be stocked with sky images.

If nature is not supplying the wanted shapes at the moment of notation, your memory should be able to fill the need. This is creative and aesthetic liberation and you need no longer be obedient to the material of the moment.

Sponges may be used to damp large areas, or to apply large washes—particularly in sky formations—and for this purpose, synthetic sponges are best.

However, for gaining textural qualities in the wash, natural (sea-growing) sponges are best, as they are heavily textured, and rough to the touch.



Two skies (wet-in-wet)

Chapter 11

Putting It All Together

A Variety of Techniques to Try

Now that you have gained general knowledge of the materials and uses of them in watercolor, and we have discussed the main factors which will affect you in watercolor landscape painting: tonal values, light and shade, perspective, etc., it is time now for you to put it all together with practice, practice, practice, turning your *theoretical* knowledge into *working* knowledge. Working knowledge is *confidence* born of creative effort, experimentation, failure and achievement. Not even the most competent of artists, professional or otherwise, achieves success every time. Keep your not so successful pictures: they will form a record of your progress over the years and you will be able to look back at them and marvel at the progress you have made.

Persistence and determination are two of the main traits necessary with, of course, a certain amount of talent and ability. You will soon find evidence of your talent and then you must just keep on working at it.

Technical practice for its own sake is only a means to an end. As soon as this technical practice has given you some feeling for the medium, you should put it to work, and use it to create.

And since the media we have been discussing have great flexibility, take advantage of that factor.

One of the most fundamental concepts that will lead you to future pictorial growth and experimentation is that any given subject or

motif may be treated in many ways, and you can discover these by using the materials and methods discussed in this book.

If a group of artists sat down to paint one given landscape, all would finish up with a different interpretation of the same subject.

We will start putting things together firstly by describing the methods used in traditional watercolor, and then follow on with other techniques. Choose the one most natural to your talents and ability, and go to it!

Traditional Watercolor with Line (Pen and Wash)

It is easier for the beginner in watercolor to tackle the subject in monotone (tones of one color) to begin with, as problems of color are avoided for the time being. Felt tip pen drawings with a light wash of color are helpful. Personally I have always found a linear method of watercolor painting to be the natural one for me, but only experience will tell you which method or methods suit you best.

Watercolor pens are excellent for quick outdoor sketches. The most common medium for pen and wash (and one traditionally used by Rembrandt, and other great painters) is sepia ink. Some people prefer black India ink, however, and some use a colored ink such as green or blue. It is more usual to draw the subject first in line, and you will probably find this the easiest method. A variety of pens may be used:

mapping, post office, architect's, quill and reed; sometimes two or more are used in the one picture. I prefer, once the subject is drawn in line, to damp the areas where the darkest tones will be, and brush them in with almost undiluted ink, adding the mid-tones when the paper is almost dry, and leaving small sparkling areas of white paper. Finally, I may decide to damp the whole area again (with the exception of the white areas) and add more textural accents with the quill pen, letting the line blur and run here and there.

Sometimes, as in 'The Pine Tree', I added the palest washes of Prussian blue over certain areas and the palest wash of Indian red to the cottage roof. See page 26.

General Hints

For the more traditional technique, that is transparent watercolor, the paper has a decisive influence over the quality of the wash, being the lightest tone of all, from which all the other tones have to be keyed. The uniform texture of the surface of the watercolor paper also plays an important part.

Sometimes a unifying underwash of pale warm color is run over the whole drawing with a broad thick brush (instead of leaving the paper as the lightest tone).

Glittering highlights may also be obtained by scraping and roughening the surface of the paper where necessary. For this purpose, a scraper, linocutting tool, or the edge of a razorblade may be used.

Color may also be applied to rough paper with a full brush, then wiped out with a sponge or damp rag, so that the color lies in the hollow of the grain, leaving the top surface of the paper to sparkle with light.

Stippling (pure color dotted in with point of the brush) gains brilliance also, and lends a gem like quality to watercolor.

Certain watercolors are capable of granulation; tiny grains of pigment collect in regular patterns in the hollows of the surface of the watercolor paper. Some watercolorists employ a technique which consists of granulation of the



Stippling



Dry brush-pattern

whole surface of the watercolor paper, resulting in a somewhat misty and indefinite effect.

Colors are either classified as warm or cool colors. The warm colors are the yellows, oranges, and reds, and the cool colors consist of the greens and blues, purples, grays etc.

In traditional watercolor, the artist usually works in warm color harmonies throughout, or, conversely, cool color harmonies are used, with tiny touches of warm contrast here and there.

Tonal values (or the light and dark areas) are most important in a picture, and must be carefully placed and considered. As a general rule, for the greatest effect, use a light tone against a dark, or a dark tone against a light one (never use tonal values of the same depth or intensity against one another). Great variations and contrasts in tonal values in a picture are generally referred to as *chiaroscuro*. These elements are all very important in traditional watercolor, and need careful consideration.

There are two main methods of painting watercolor in the traditional, or academic style.

The first is known as the 'dry' method and consists of transparent washes applied one over the other when the previous wash has dried.

The second method is known as the 'wet-in-wet', when colors are dropped into the already wet surface and the whole watercolor is completed very quickly, whilst wet. The second method gives a rich, luminous quality, and a more spontaneous and lively overall effect. The first method is more static, and is less exciting.

Method 1

Here, the watercolor paper is not damped first, and all colors and washes are applied to dry paper.



Step 1. Dry method: first wash



Step 2. Dry method: second wash

Method 2

Here the watercolor paper or board is usually damped or soaked first, to allow the greatest penetration of colors.

The famous English watercolorist, J.M.W. Turner, frequently soaked his paper for long periods, sometimes many hours.



1. Drawing with paper wet all over, and lightest wash added all over



2. Lightest tones dropped or washed into the picture



3. Foreground and darkest areas washed in

Method 2 results in a soft effect, and great care must be taken not to start brushing or fiddling with the surface when the watercolor is almost dry, otherwise hard edges will appear on the painting, spoiling the soft, rich, spontaneous effect and leaving the painting worked over and labored.

Method 2, or wet-in-wet, is by far the most popular one used today for traditional watercolor, but no economy in use of paints can be exercised using this method. The artist must, in

other words, be generous in the use of his colors, to gain the maximum effect.

It is important to note that, with this method, *tubes* of color must be used to give greater body or volume of paint, and thickness of color.

With both Methods 1 and 2, pen-line drawing may be used in combination with the watercolors, (sepia drawing ink being most generally used, with quill or reed pen, or almost any other everyday type of pen).

The line drawing may be done prior to putting

on the watercolor, (or after the color has been applied, to accent the composition, or to show greater detail). A brush line may be similarly used. Sometimes, the pen or brush line is added to a wet surface and a softer and more blurred effect is thus obtained.

See the following warming-up exercises: variety in pen lines, textures, and miscellaneous line and tonal textures in landscape.

Experiment with these mediums, alone and in conjunction with watercolor.

Warming-Up Exercises—Stimulating the Imagination



Felt-tipped pen



Bristle brush



Cardboard wedge

Materials:

A bottle of cobalt blue ink, a wedge of cardboard, a flat brush (bristle), a blue felt-tipped pen, and a tube of Prussian blue.

1. Brush in pale blue areas with diluted ink.
2. Dip a wedge of cardboard in Prussian blue squeezed into a saucer, and apply in broad strokes to the darkest areas.
3. Add accents with a blue felt-tipped pen.

Try a monochromatic (one color only) watercolor, and combine two or three of the textural examples shown. Use only a few tonal values in your first attempts.

This is the most simple way for you to commence outdoor watercolor landscape painting, as you have only the tonal values to worry about at first, and then, when tackling the problem of local color, you will be more readily able to judge the tonal values of the various colors in your landscape. 'The Pine Tree' was done using the method explained above.



Waves breaking over rocks



Lakeside and Reflections

Damp the whole area of the paper before beginning, and work quickly whilst wet (wet-in-wet). Felt pen is applied when the surface is dry. *Note:* When painting wet-in-wet, if the surface dries before completion wet the white section you are working on again, using a large flat brush and clean water.



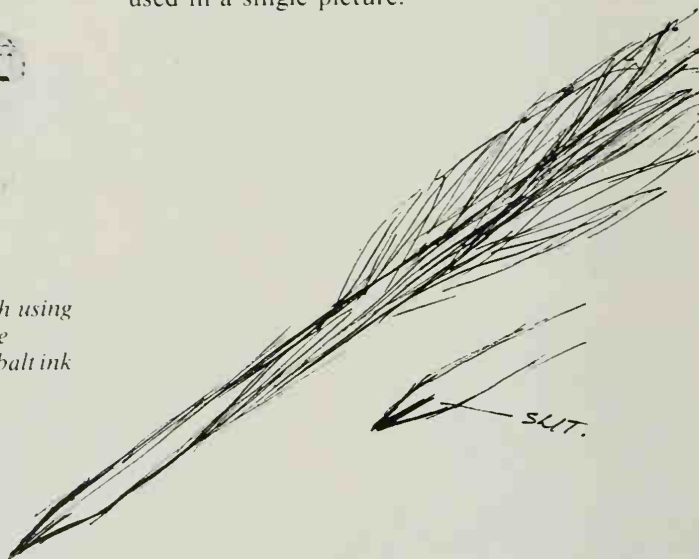
*Two minute sketch using
Prussian blue tube
watercolor and cobalt ink*

*Two minute sketch,
showing a technique for
the delineation of shrub
forms with grass and
weeds in foreground
(wet-in-wet method)*



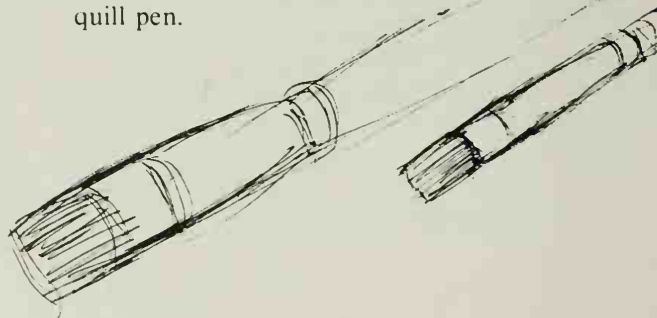
1. Foreground and sky washed into semi-wet paper with $\frac{1}{2}$ " bristle brush.
2. Foreground: small folded piece (or wedge) of cardboard used to apply undiluted Prussian blue color to wet paper in blocks at various angles, to give feeling of rock formations. Wedge used for accents on tree also.
3. Quill pen and ink used to add fluid line accents.

Cardboard wedges of different widths may be used in a single picture.

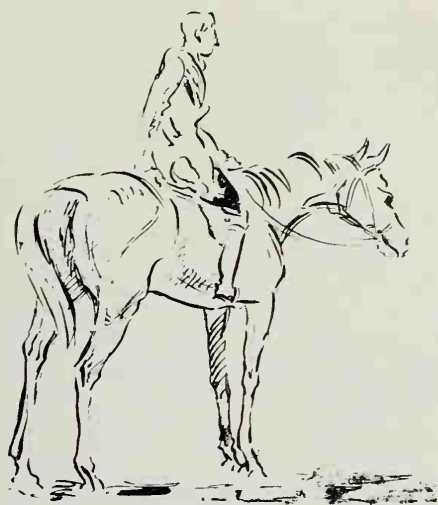


Hand-cut quill pen (goose-feather) cut to shape of ordinary nib with a tiny slit which helps to hold the ink.

1. Wash of flat blue over whole area with $\frac{1}{2}$ " bristle.
 2. Accents added to wet surface with $\frac{1}{4}$ " (No. 8) bristle-brush.
 3. Darkest accents added with $\frac{1}{4}$ " bristle.
 4. Line added to wet areas with quill pen.
 5. When dry, a few accents (grass stalks) added to foreground for interest and additional texture.
- * Experiment with different textures with your quill pen.

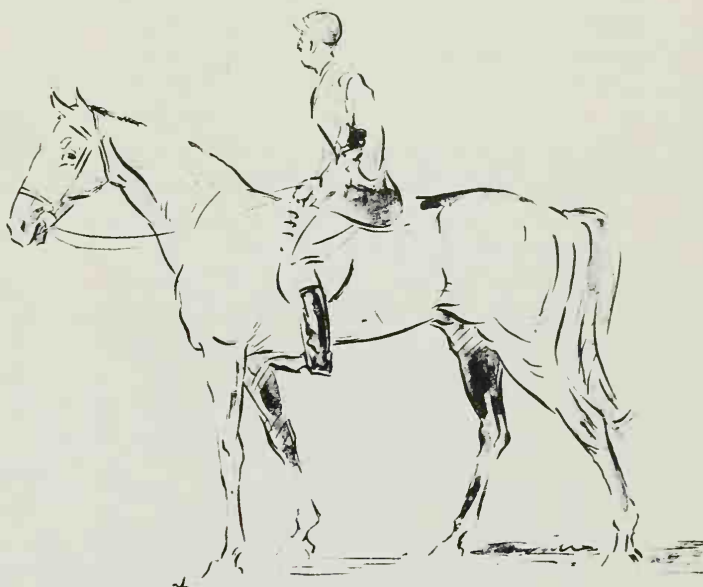


A. Pen and wash—dry washes (traditional method)



Pen line, and first light wash (try an architect's fine line pen)

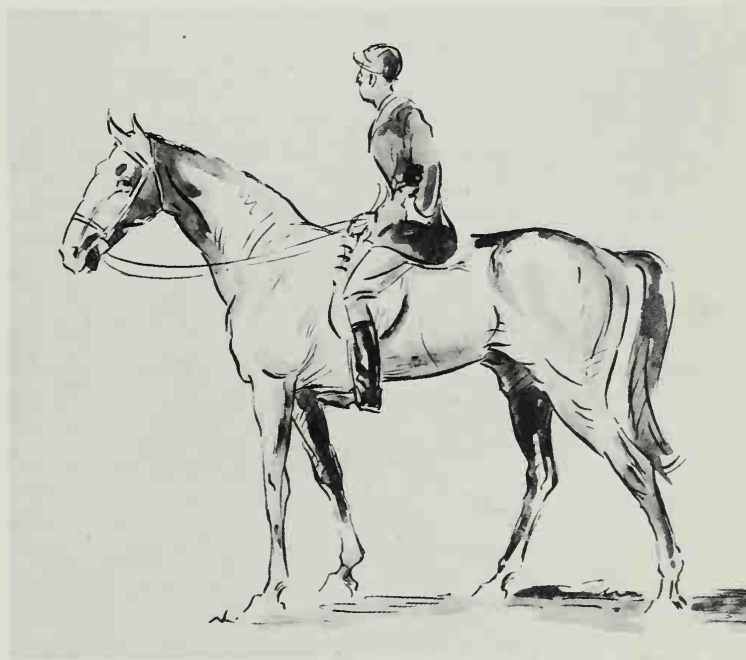
B. Pen and wash—dry washes (traditional method)



1. Pen line and first light wash added



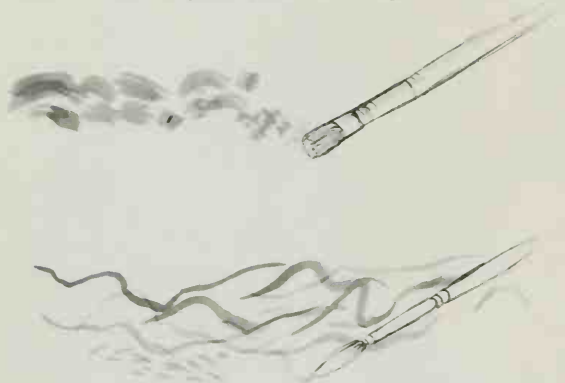
2. Darker tonal areas added. Darker pen accents added.



2. Darker pen accents, and deeper tonal areas added

Materials: India ink—lamp black (tube) for washes—ordinary post office nib for drawing (try other nibs)

Test for a good point by wetting the brush, and then bringing it to a fine point between the fingers, or in the mouth. If the brush does *not* come to a fine point, it is *not* a good one.



No. 8 hair watercolor brush

Gouache (Opaque Watercolor or Body color)

Using Powdered Watercolor

Powdered watercolor, sold in small bags of approximately 1 lb or ½ kg, is non-toxic and is available from most major art suppliers. It is generally called powder tempera color, and is easy to use as follows:

Place some of the color in a mixing saucer, add a little water, and stir to a smooth paste. Add more water if desired. Colors can be mixed together, or white added to make tints of each color.

The beauty of this technique is that lighter colors may be stippled over dark colors with a bristle brush, and interesting textural qualities may be achieved.

The Steps Are As Follows:

1. Sketch in the landscape or still-life with soft pencil (5B or 6B).
2. Wash in all color areas throughout the picture (flat washes) with a large brush (bristle or hair), using thin washes of the powder color.
3. With a ¼" or ½" brush (bristle), and the

There are many different varieties of brushes making many different kinds of strokes. Here are a few of them:



Chinese or Japanese brush used in sumi ink drawing

powder color used thickly, with very little water, start brushing or 'stippling' in over the basic washes, intensifying and deepening the colors beneath. If your colors or tonal values are too dark, lighter tones, or tints of color may be applied or 'stippled' over them, using a very thick mixture.

4. Finally (as with the cover painting), charcoal was used to draw and accent where necessary.

5. Fixative was sprayed over the whole picture. *Note:* There is a special glue-based medium which may be used with powdered color, to stop the powdered paint 'lifting' when applied very dry and thick to the painting surface. It is mixed in with the water and paint in the saucer. It is often called 'impasto medium'.

Note: Powder tempera color comes also in packets, jars and tins, and is called 'fixed powder color'.

Ready-mixed powder tempera color comes in small jars and tins, and is easy to use.

This technique is very effective when used on fairly rough (or heavy) paper, as the charcoal gives a lively and interesting texture.

Note: Paste (preferably wallpaper paste) may be added to the powder color as follows: mix the

paste to a fairly liquid consistency in a large dish or bowl, and then add to the colors in the proportion of one part paste to five parts color. The paste will help to fix the powder colors to the paper.

Most powder colors have a binder added, so that the addition of the paste would only be necessary in certain instances when large areas are involved, as in painting a big picture on hard-board (Masonite).

Gouache on Masonite

To apply powder colors to Masonite (hard-board), an undercoat of white tempera paint with a little binder added, must be rolled smoothly onto the Masonite surface first. This undercoat will stop the powder colors sinking or soaking into the board surface, and when dry makes an ideal painting surface, with a slight texture.

These paint rollers may be obtained in different widths at all art suppliers, and are composed of a rubberized surface, with a short handle. Powder paints may be applied extremely thickly to this surface, with bristle brushes, giving a beautiful, heavily textured finish.

See 'Equestrian Figures' on page 47.

Note: Gouache may be painted on either light or dark colored paper or prepared grounds, and is extremely effective using the ground as a tone or color.

Watercolor Technique Used with Gouache

Gouache With and Without Collage on Scratchboard or Scraperboard

Firstly, a note about scratchboard. It is a type of clay surface (very brittle and easily cracked) on cardboard backing. It is very expensive, and must be stored flat. It is generally used in the commercial art sector (black and white newspaper and book illustration, etc.). It gains its name from the fact that once the ink or opaque

watercolor has been laid in broad areas on the board, a scraper may be used to draw or scrape white lines or textures into the black or colored areas. In this way, rhythmic lines may be used to join and overlap various areas of color, and unite the design. (If one color is placed over another, and the top color is scraped away, the color underneath will show.) Many decorative effects are possible in this way.

The technique used with gouache and collage on scratchboard will be described and illustrated step-by-step. It is suitable only for decorative subjects, not realistic ones. If tackling a landscape in this way it must be kept very much as a design. It lends itself more to still life, decorative figures, birds and animals.

Step 1

Divide your scratchboard into large simple areas of color and apply the colors with a 2" (5 cm) ordinary household varnish brush and let the large flat areas dry. (The watercolor used is powder watercolor which is sold in bags, and is mixed with water to a poster color consistency on large flat plates, plastic ones are excellent.) Sometimes it is necessary to add a little binder or glue to the powder color to hold it.

Step 2

Your design, which has been drawn on to a sheet of strong draftsman tracing paper, is traced down carefully on to the scraperboard, and then drawn on to the color areas with brush and black Indian ink.

Step 3

Areas of collage (various paste-up materials such as colored paper, portions of decorative wrapping paper, etc.) are now pasted down to enhance the design, and add liveliness and interest.

Step 4

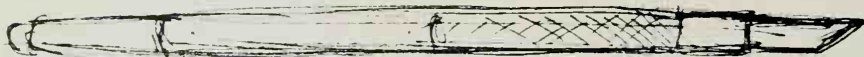
With your scraper, scrape or draw decorative rhythmic lines into the design, to accent your drawing, to link areas of color, to add texture, to bring rhythm and movement to your picture. As

you scrape through, the colors underneath will come through, adding a rich, almost stained glass effect. Small areas of solid black, some-

times with lines or textures scraped in, will add strength to the design.



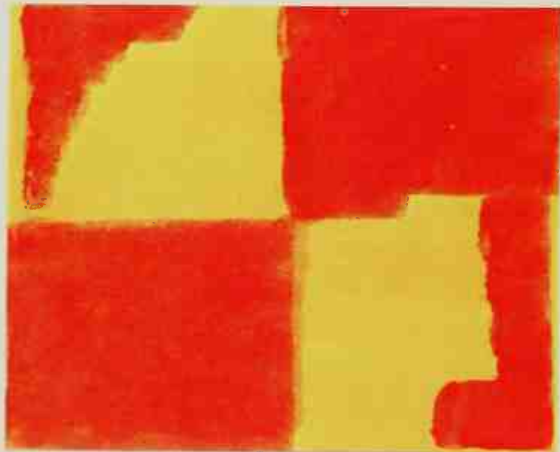
A. *Scraper or scratcher*



B. *The versatile 'N.T.' cutter with four interchangeable tool points*

Boy on a rocking horse

1. *Large background areas of color*



2. *Drawing superimposed*



3. *Areas of collage added*



4. *Rhythmic lines scraped in*





du Moulin

Carousel

Traditional Watercolor With a Dry-Brush

Uses

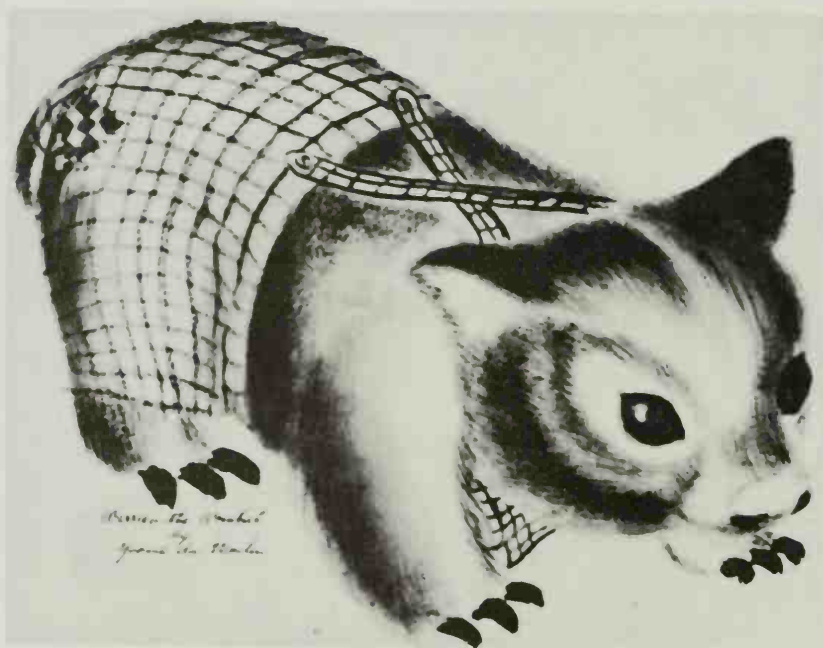
The technique of dry-brush in watercolor has a number of uses—magazine illustration, children's book illustration, still life and plant forms.

Textures

The main purpose of dry-brush is to add texture to the watercolor. See the furry feel of 'Warreen the wombat'. Also, when used on heavy (rough) watercolor paper, it helps give the illusion of waves and water. As the dry-brush is drawn over the rough surface, the paint catches the tops of the textured paper, and gives a feeling of sparkling water, and movement of waves. Dry-brush is also helpful in landscape generally, the textured side of an old brick or stone building, dry grasses in the foreground of a picture, etc. Try the technique in black and white, before proceeding to color, using a tube of lampblack watercolor.

Procedure

1. This is quite simple. With a broad brush, put a flat gray wash over the area being painted at the moment.
2. When the wash is almost dry (or completely dry if a more rough textured effect is desired), dip a flat bristle brush or a watercolor brush into fairly thickly mixed lamp black, and apply on its side to areas of the gray under-wash. You may be using the dry-brush to add form, i.e. to a head or figure in an illustration, or to give *texture* to a mass of foliage, a leaf, etc. Practise drawing the brush across the paper with a loose swinging movement, making the strokes away from you, rather than towards you. Make lots of strokes on a spare sheet of paper first. Always try out the brush on spare paper before actually applying the brush to your watercolor. Never apply dry-brush to an extremely wet area, as the textured dry-brush effect will be lost, melting into the under-wash. Only practice will tell you how dry the surface should be.



Warreen the wombat



*Dry-brush techniques (lamp black tube watercolor).
Flexible wrist movement is important.*

Watercolor Techniques Using Block-Out Materials

Method 1

Use greasy crayons to draw in main lines of the picture, wherever you wish white lines, solids, or textures of the white paper to remain. On completion of the watercolor, the areas of greasy pencil or chalk can be rubbed off, leaving the white paper.

Method 2

This method required maskoid, sometimes called frisket (Misket) or masking fluid.

1. When using this technique, which helps to retain sparkling white areas throughout the picture, I usually draw in the main details of the picture with a soft pencil (5B or 6B) and then go over the lines with a brush and the maskoid. Use a fine line brush and wash out the maskoid frequently.
2. The next step is to lay down with a broad flat varnish brush (about 3" or 8 cm wide) a wash of warm yellow all over the picture. If using a waterproof ink, I usually choose sunshine yellow. In watercolor, I use a yellow ochre or other warm yellow.

* If you wish to have an area of pure blue, wash it in before the yellow wash, and do not take the yellow over it, otherwise you will have a green area, instead of blue.

3. The surface is then subdivided into large areas of flat color, or orange, blue, green, brown etc. using the varnish brush, and the washes allowed to dry, taking care to leave plenty of yellow areas uncovered by the succeeding washes.
4. With a rough cloth (an old piece of tea-toweling etc.) or the fingertips, rub away all the maskoid covering sections of the picture and you now have your picture defined in white lines, with large flat areas of color.
5. Now, using a blue or black felt-tipped pen, or brush with waterproof blue or black ink, accent the main lines of the design, adding textural areas for water, brick texture on buildings, leafy areas, etc., and pull the whole design together with the dark lines. Any areas such as whitewashed walls, etc., would have been held by the maskoid in solid areas of white. Leave your white lines where they help the design.
6. Add darker tones here and there where necessary to accent areas of shadow, a dark tree trunk, etc.



Fishing village, Greece. This technique allows plenty of scope for textural qualities in landscape.

Hydra Harbor, Greece, At Night. A useful method for depicting artificial lights on water.



Method 2 Block-Out Materials



1. Draw main lines of design with maskoid.



2. Warm yellow wash over whole picture (except blue areas).



3. Block in main color areas with broad brush.



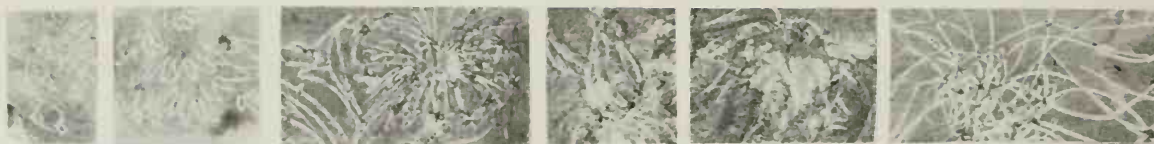
4. With soft cloth, rub off maskoid when dry. Add blue blocks of color to some areas where maskoid has been rubbed off. A finer point blue felt pen has been used for the final line accents. Note: this technique is more suited to decorative than realistic interpretations.



5. Add darker line accents necessary, with a pen or brush.

6. The finished painting is shown on the front cover.

Warming-Up Exercises—Using Maskoid



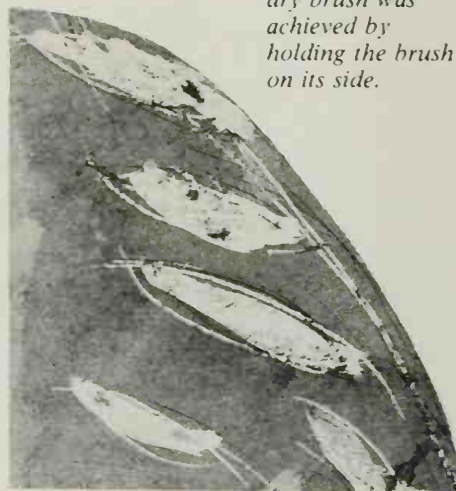
Some suggested plant and foliage textures for foregrounds



Experiment with foregrounds—too many artists fail to make their foregrounds interesting. Try out different textures for foreground interest and variety. The above sketch was quickly indicated with a soft pencil (5B or 6B), and then the foreground grasses were drawn in fine pen with maskoid. A brush was used for the large clumps of grass shown in white in the extreme foreground, and was used 'dry-brush' as in figure 1 above. When the maskoid was dry, the washes of blue were applied in tonal values, from light sky to dark areas of ancient temple pillars. When the washes were completely dry the maskoid was rubbed off with fingertips, leaving the result as above. A few darker lines and accents were added last, with felt-tip pen.

Below: Thin lines drawn in with fine nib, then solid white areas brushed in. (Procedure then as in diagram 2)

Here, a feeling of dry brush was achieved by holding the brush on its side.

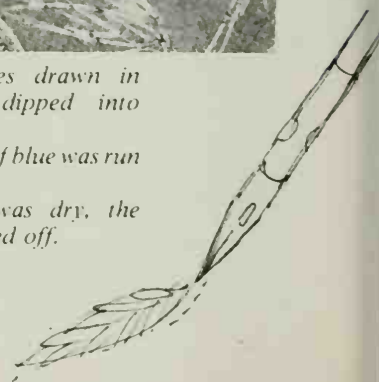


A
B

*A. Middle distance point of greatest interest and importance
B. Foreground of equal size and importance as middle distance*



1. Foreground grasses drawn in first, with pen dipped into maskoid.
2. When dry, a wash of blue was run over whole area.
3. When the wash was dry, the maskoid was rubbed off.



Materials:

*Prussian blue and burnt
umber watercolor tubes*

Maskoid

*1/4" bristle brush (No. 8,
pure bristle, made in
China)*

Dry-brush block-out

Dry-brush watercolor



Marine Landscape

Using Dry-Brush Block-Out Method, and Dry-Brush Watercolor

1. Seascape is first sketched in lightly with a soft pencil (6B).
2. Areas to be left white (waves, flying spray, etc.) are blocked out with maskoid, using a 1/4" bristle brush on its side, and dragging it across the paper, and 'stippling' where the waves break into spray.
3. When the maskoid is dry, brush a pale wash of Prussian blue across the whole area, with the

exception of a few dry brush strokes here and there in the foreground. Mix burnt umber and Prussian blue, and wash in rocks and cliffs; add darker accents here and there.

4. When dry, rub off all maskoid with fingertips.

5. Add final darker accents here and there with dry-brush bristle brush.

This exercise will show you the value of large areas of white paper in watercolor techniques.

Paper used is one of the whitest papers obtainable.



John P. ...

Rough day on the Victorian coast

Watercolor, Combined with Charcoal
(Traditional Watercolor)



Native flowers 1

Charcoal, Crayon and Watercolor—Method 1

The combination of watercolor with drawing materials such as charcoal or crayon is a very old one and has been widely used by many generations of artists. Firstly, the questions of shapes, placing of objects, and tone are decided by the charcoal or crayon underdrawing, and for the time being the problem of color is not a worry. Once you have completed your drawing, with your fixative applied, the next step is to apply your washes of watercolor. Transparent washes are usually used, permitting the underlying charcoal drawing to show through. However, gouache (opaque watercolor) can be used in certain areas.

Method 2

Reverse your method (above) and paint in large limpid washes of watercolor first. When the washes have dried, charcoal or crayon may be used to define forms, and to deepen tones. This method is excellent for a subject calling for close tones, such as mist, rain and dimly lit subjects. Charcoal may be used as a preliminary medium only, to outline the principle forms, and act as a

guide for the watercolor brush. The outline traces are often left in the finished picture.

Method 3

Ink, either in line or mass, has a natural affinity with charcoal, crayon, and watercolor, and has many possibilities.

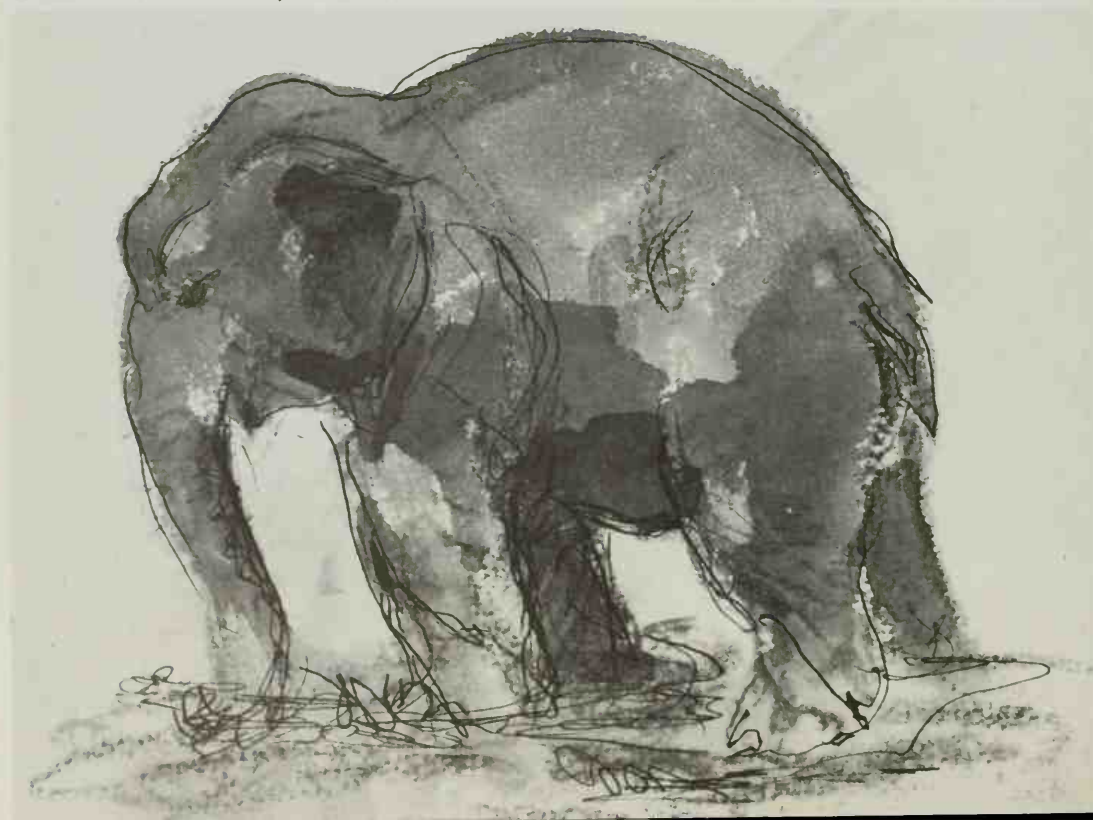
When large black masses and strong lines are demanded in a subject, ink is often used because of its maximum blackness, and quickness of application.

You will find that one of the most rewarding ways of using the ink and charcoal combination with watercolor is to draw in the important forms first with pen or brush, and when this drawing is dry, charcoal tones can be drawn or rubbed in. Fixative is then applied, and watercolor washes added as a final touch.

The above methods are known as combined or mixed media, and can lead to many fruitful technical discoveries. It is an area that should be explored by all enterprising artists, and can lead to many unusual effects.

Fixative is a colorless coating which is sprayed on to drawings to prevent smearing. It can be applied by mouth atomizer or pressurized cans.

Method 2—charcoal and pen over wash





Reflections at Port Adelaide (pen and wash)

'Morning mists in Warriewood Valley':
Description of method used for this watercolor.
(Exhibited in Wynne Prize 1979)

1. A very fine architect's pen was used to draw delicately the main lines and details of the old sheds and fences, and the main lines of tree anatomy in the pines and other trees behind the old buildings. Clumps of tall grasses and weeds in the foreground were also delineated with this pen (very lightly and delicately).

2. Next, sky and cloud forms were washed in lightly with *sumi* ink, and then the gray hill forms behind the trees.

3. All areas of foliage were lightly washed in with the blue-gray *sumi* ink, and progressively darkened where necessary to show form and darker tonal areas, whilst the surface was still wet.

4. Lightest tones of the ground foliage and bushes behind the buildings were washed in,

together with the lightest tonal areas of the sheds, leaving areas of white paper on rooftops and fences. Next, tones were darkened and intensified *behind* the sheds, and on the shadow sides of walls, leaving the old wooden fence in silhouette.

5. Washes of *sumi* ink were added to shadow sides of the clumps of grasses in the foreground, leaving large areas of crisp white paper.

6. Next, light washes of Prussian blue tube watercolor were added to middle distance and foreground areas, with a little light red and burnt sienna washes added here and there to the buildings.

7. Finally, the *sumi* ink block was dampened, held on its side, and drawn across some of the foreground areas to add form and texture to the picture. (Applied to the paper when dry.)

8. Last of all, final touches and accents were added to branches of trees, old fences, buildings and foreground grasses with a charcoal pencil, giving crisp little accents here and there.

(You can easily identify the areas of the picture which were painted 'wet-in-wet'.)

This watercolor was painted on the spot, in two unhurried sessions, at the *same* time each morning.



Morning mists in Warriewood Valley

(Opposite) *Native flowers 2*



Suzanne du Mordier

Batik on Paper

The art form or craft known as *batik* consists of blocking out areas of cloth or material by brushing or drawing hot liquid wax over the areas of the design that are to remain without dyes. The wax acts as a masking fluid. The material is then immersed in a dye bath, taken out and dried, and the waxed areas are then ironed off, leaving the lines of the original design underneath, in the original fabric color.

The same principle applies to batik on paper, the design being drawn or brushed on to the paper (strong cartridge or similar) with liquid

hot wax (a melted down candle will do). You may then brush one or more colored inks over the portions of the design, and add accents with quill pen and ink, or brush (litho printing ink may be used with pen or brush also).

Your last step is to iron off the waxed paper areas with a warm iron, using a heavy sheet of paper (newsprint or butcher's paper), between the iron and the design.

See 'Dancing birds' below.

This technique is more suitable for decorative subjects.



Dancing birds (batik on paper)

Materials:

Hot wax
Sepia ink and water
Litho printing ink
Quill pen line
= mixed media



3 minute sketch of a banana flower, using blue-black Nikko watercolor pen.

These watercolor pens are useful for recording details of plant forms to be used later in compositions and in landscapes.

Notice the greater textural quality when used on very heavy watercolor paper (rough).

Carry one of these pens, and make notes and quick sketches wherever possible.

Remember, structural knowledge and understanding is necessary in the painting of a subject.



The thicker the lines, the darker the wash will be. Experiment with pen lines and wash. Do not load the brush with too much water. Just draw, then brush with water.

Low foliage (wet-in-wet using natural sponge)



LOW FOLIAGE.

WEEDS

* A NATURAL SPONGE
IS DIPPED INTO
TUBE WATERCOLOR
AND STIPPLED ON TO
THE DAMP UNDERWASH
A FINE BRUSH IS USED
TO ADD FINAL
DARK ACCENTS.



PINE TREE

The Sea

It may be helpful, since we are concerned with ways of painting the sea, to point out some of the factors which may help the artist to understand the subject. For to paint a subject we must first *understand* it.

Patterns of coastal waters, no matter where in the world, are affected by a series of gradations, ledges and rocks, which are often not obvious to the onlooker. However, the rocks lying below the surface of the water as well as those above, with the attendant currents and undertows, strongly influence the great fluid motion of the sea. Winds are also important. All these factors play a part in creating surface patterns so important to the design and concept of a painting. The sea is not co-operative—it will not hold a pose or position, and is continually changing. The making of many careful sketches, and your own observations will help you to analyse the push and pull movements in waves, and to arrive at a successful method of interpreting this difficult subject. To help your awareness of the rhythms and harmonies existing around your coastal waters, I am including some diagrams illustrating basic points to be taken into consideration.

Do not portray water as a solid block of color. It is not a solid mass, but a fluid, moving body. Its movement is constant, even on the quietest day, without winds and storms. Water itself, being inanimate, moves when influenced by external forces. There is endless variety and pattern in a coastal landscape. Think of the

ocean as a concentrated body or mass of fluid material. The waves, therefore, should be treated as a shifting or movement within this mass, and not as a thing apart. Observe these points, and study the following diagrammatic sketches, and your seascape will acquire new vigor, awareness and understanding. Your interpretation of waves, and of the sea, will become more competent and rewarding.

The four diagrams which follow are self-explanatory. The sky in a seascape is very important as it sets the mood for the painting, and also determines the source of light.

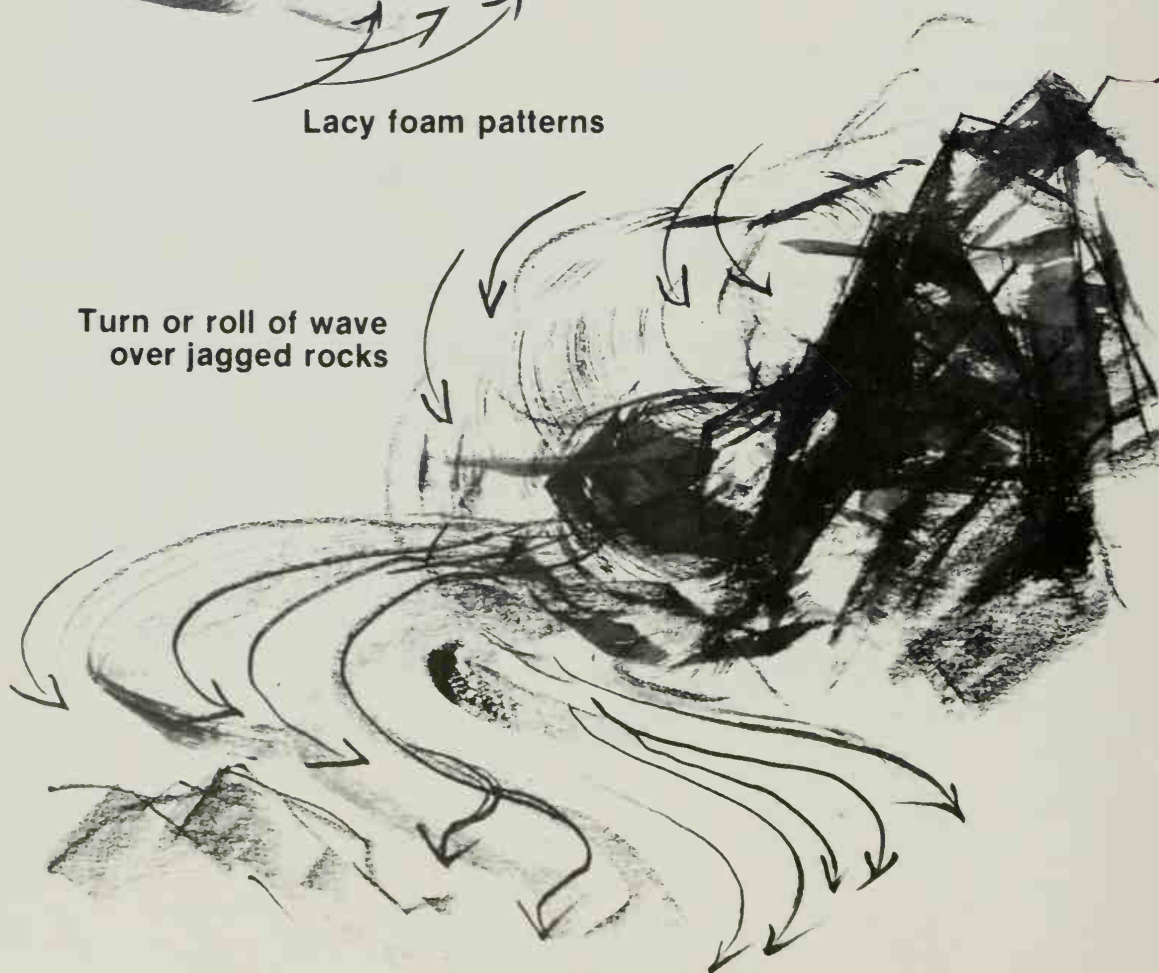
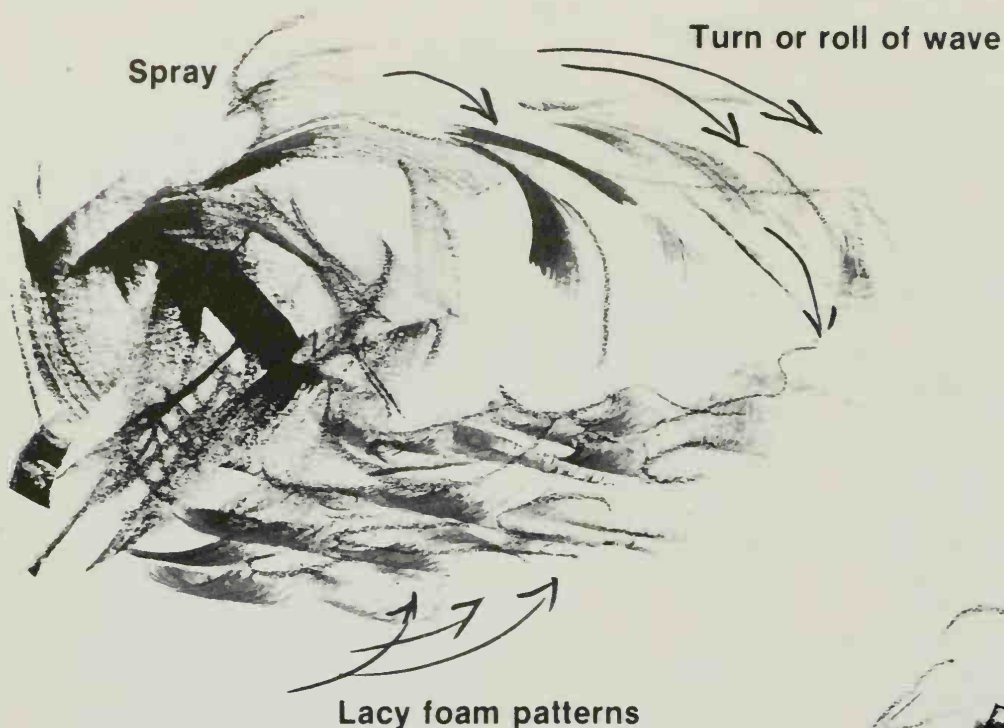
A Few Points to Remember

There should be only one focal point of interest in the painting, with everything else merely relating to it, e.g. 'Wave breaking on rocks' page 70.

Look for contrasts of forms, textures—and avoid too much action between the sky and the water. Too much surf and too many billowy clouds within one composition will tend to make your painting look confused and overstated. Place your emphasis either on sea or sky, not on both areas. The total effect will then be one of harmony and unity.

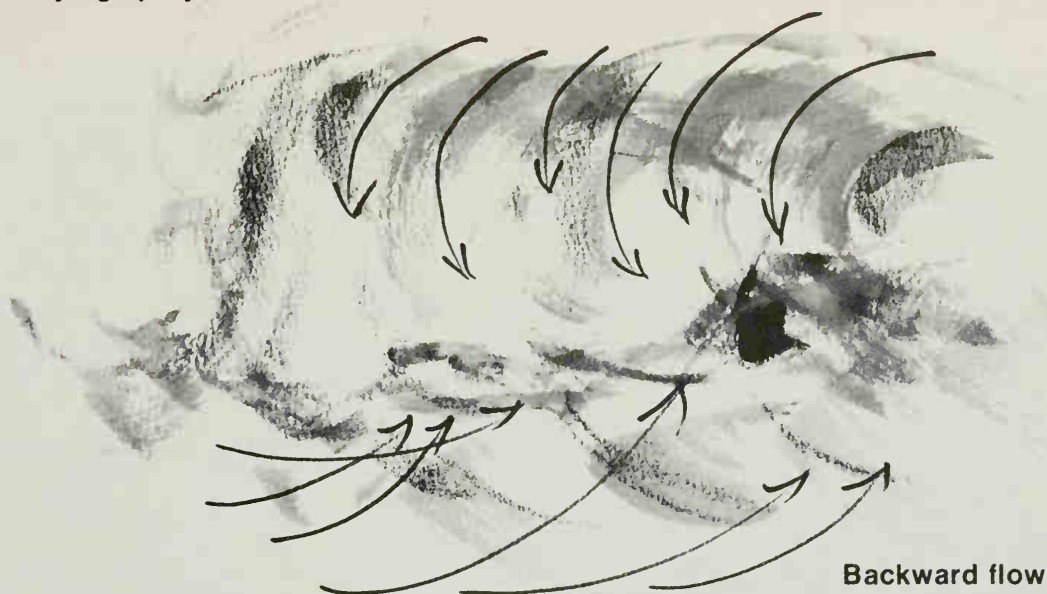
The water itself has no color, but reflects the elements around it—thus the sea will reflect the sky, the rocks and often the underwater areas, e.g. a wave breaking over a rocky bottom may be a clear iridescent green, or a yellow and coppery color when breaking on a sand bar. Keep these points in mind.

Diagrams showing wave structure and movement



Flying spray

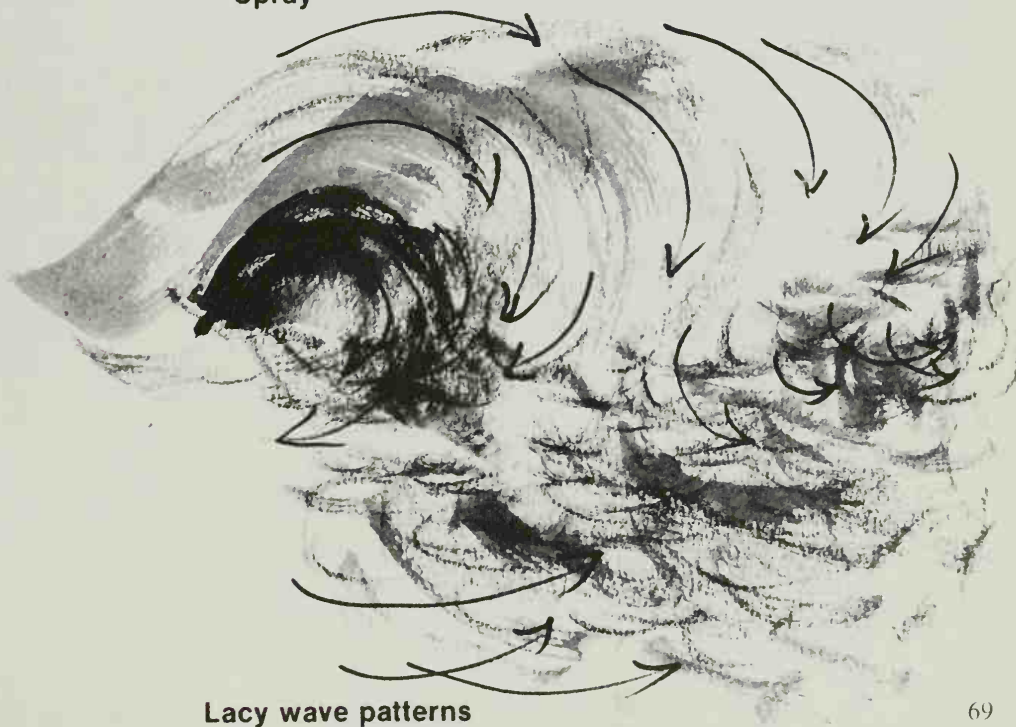
Forward thrust



A good method for making quick notes (lamp black mixed in a saucer and applied with a wedge of cardboard; accents added with charcoal)

Spray

Forward thrust



Wave breaking on rocks (block-out + watercolor, traditional technique)



The quick black and white sketch (above) was done from a two-minute cardboard wedge and wash impression completed on the spot.

The large wave has hit the rocks, and has been thrown upwards and backwards in a mountain of spray. The waters having washed over the

foreground rocks run by numerous little channels to the centre of the picture where they join into one stream and enter the sea again.

By studying the four preceding diagrams you will soon become familiar with the moods and movements of the sea.

Girl's head (dry-brush)



Bottle-brush stems (traditional dry-brush technique)



Sleeping cat (wet-in-wet, sepia pen line + wash)



Method:

1. *Pen drawing (fine mapping pen)*
2. *Light gray wash, leaving sparkling white accents (paper)*
3. *Final accents with pen*

Lady Godiva (air-brushed watercolor, then inked printing roller and pen accents)



Metamorphic rock formation with tree growing from ledge



Appendix A—List of Materials

Here is an expanded list of materials which may prove helpful to the beginner in watercolor—papers, boards, brushes and colors. First of all, the *ground* on which your watercolor will be painted: good quality cartridge paper is excellent for this medium, it is *not* necessary to begin with expensive watercolor papers, this is a matter of individual choice and economy.

Watercolor papers and boards are obtainable in extra rough, rough, medium and smoother surfaces. The extra rough and rough papers are the heavy ones, and rarely, if ever, need stretching (see pages 8 and 9). The boards consist of watercolor papers mounted on cardboard, and are available in rough, medium and smooth surfaces. If using board, I prefer the rougher surfaces, but the beginner will find (as in the case with watercolor papers) that the medium surfaces are easier to handle, and more sympathetic to his or her needs.

When first trying out dry-brush techniques, you will find it necessary to use a paper or board with a certain amount of texture, or 'tooth'. Good quality cartridge is excellent for this.

Brushes for watercolor are many and varied. There is no hard and fast rule which states that expensive sable brushes *must* be used—your watercolor will be just as successful using synthetic hair brushes. Choose those which best suit your personal needs.

I myself use white bristle (oil) brushes almost as much as camel hair, synthetics, or sable brushes. Of course, when delineation or fine brush line work is required, a pointed synthetic or sable hair brush *must* be used.

Pointed hair, or synthetic hair brushes, are useful in sizes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. The test of a good

pointed brush is to wet it, and bring to a point in the mouth, or with the fingers. If the brush does *not* come to a fine point, it is not of good quality.

White bristle brushes, in sizes 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10, are generally useful for laying large washes, and for dry-brush work with, or without, rubber block-out materials.

'Fan' brushes are useful for unusual textural qualities, and dry-brush over wash.

Dusters and mops (very large floppy brushes in camel and goat hair) are invaluable in laying down large background wash areas such as skies. Oval wash brushes come into this category also.

Watercolors in tubes, as stated earlier, should be restricted to a basic palette—attempting to use too many colors is a mistake often made by the beginner.

I never use black in watercolor, as it often dulls and muddies a color scheme, and I prefer to mix Payne's gray and Winsor green which gives a beautiful rich luminous black. The other colors which I mainly use are Indian yellow, Naples yellow, Alizarin crimson, Venetian red, Prussian blue, Cerulean blue, Burnt sienna, Burnt umber, Vandyke brown, Indian red, Olive green, Indigo and Raw umber.

Granulation or Sedimentation

Granulation or sedimentation occurs because of the interaction between earth (heavy bodied pigments) and dye based (light, staining pigments).

With all painting mediums, there are only these two types of pigments; i.e. those that stain and those that cover. One is light (dye), and the

other is heavy (earth). Granulation can occur only if earth and dye pigments are used together. It is further enhanced by the texture of the paper when the dye pigment stains the entire surface,

and the earth pigment merely settles into the hollows on the textured surface of the paper. (It should also be noted that earth pigments are easily removed, while dye pigments are not.)

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Cogniat, Raymond, *Dufy*, Crown/Collins, 1956.

Cogniat, Raymond, *XXth Century Drawings, Watercolours*, Uffici Press, Milan. Includes watercolors by Klee, Franz Marc, August Macke, Maurice de Vlaminck, Kandinsky, Van Dongen, Modigliani, Derdin, John Marin (U.S.A.), Gleizes, Herbin, Lhote, Leger, Dufy, Roualt, Segonzac, Kisling and Lionel Feininger.

Laliberte and Magelon, *Drawing with Ink, History and Modern Techniques*, Van Nostrand Reinhold. Includes drawings of landscape subjects by Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Corot, Velasquez (quill, pen and thin washes of India Ink), the early history of ink.

Röttger, Ernst and Klante, Dieter, *Creative Drawing*, Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1964.

The last two books are excellent for the student wishing to combine line techniques with wash watercolor.

Glossary

Abstract art A total, or nearly total departure from ordinary visual aspects of nature. (Totally abstract art may be called non-objective, non-figurative, or non-representational.)

Aquarelle Transparent watercolor.

Balance The distribution of areas of mass, of color, line, tone or texture from side to side of an imaginary central line or axis in a picture.

Block-out To prevent a desired area of the ground from receiving color. See **maskoid**.

Body color See **gouache**.

Collage A picture built up wholly or partly from pieces of paper, cloth or other materials stuck on to the paper, canvas, or other ground. (When used in conjunction with painting, may be termed 'mixed media'.)

Chiaroscuro (*Ital.* = light, dark) Refers to attainment of emphasis by using light-dark contrasts.

Complementary color Each primary color (red, blue and yellow) has a complementary formed by a mixture of the other two, and it is part of Impressionist theory that every primary has the complementary color in the shadows cast by it. Thus a yellow object will have violet in the shadows.

Composition The art of combining the elements of a picture or other work of art into a satisfactory visual whole.

Cold or cool colors The opposite of hot or warm colors. Those colors and tones which are blue, blue-green, or blue-violet in general effect.

Contour The outline which, in drawing or painting, forms the boundary of one shape, defining it in relation to another.

Design Roughly the same in normal usage, as *composition*.

Divisionism See Impressionism, Pointillism.

Expressionism The search for expressiveness of style by means of exaggerations and distortions of line and color; a picture or painting carrying great emotional impact. See paintings by Munch.

Fauve (*Les Fauves* = The Wild Beasts) Paris Salon (1905). These painters used violent color, and created a furore, with Matisse as their leader.

Fixative A thin varnish sprayed on to drawings and pastels to prevent the surface being rubbed or smudged.

Foreshortening Perspective applied to a single object, e.g. an arm pointing directly at the spectator, so that little more than the hand can be seen.

Frisket See **Maskoid**.

Gouache Body color or opaque watercolor. Lacking the transparency of aquarelle. Achieved by adding a white pigment or powder watercolor, over first washes.

Ground Any surface onto which a painting or drawing is rendered, e.g. paper is a ground for watercolor, and canvas or hardboard is a ground for oils.

Hue Refers to any one of the three primaries (red, blue, yellow) or a combination of any two (synonymous with color).

Imitative The opposite to imaginative; slavish copying of nature, or imitating nature.

Impressionism The most important artistic phenomenon of the 19th Century and the first of the Modern Movements. The name was derived from Monet's picture 'Impression, Sunrise' (1872). It represents the play of light on water, looking straight into the rising sun. First Impressionist Exhibition, 1874, (Monet, Renoir,

Sisley, Pissarro, Cezanne, Degas, Morisot, and others). The paint was applied in small, brightly colored dabs, with a lack of firm outline, combined with bright color, and a generally high key.

India(n) ink Washable, permanent black drawing ink.

Intensity Refers to the color degree of a hue, its purity or modification toward a neutral gray.

Key Refers to the value of a color—it is said to be in *low* key if dark, and *high* key if light.

Local color The actual color of an object uninfluenced by color or reflected light; i.e. local color of a leaf is green.

Maskoid A rubbery liquid used in watercolor painting to block-out or prevent a desired area of the ground from receiving color. Also called masking fluid, frisket or Misket.

Matt(e) Any surface with a non-reflective finish. Matt paper has a soft finish or texture, without shine.

Medium When used to specify a particular artist's work, it refers to the materials used.

Medium surface In watercolor papers, a medium surface is also called cold press, kid matt(e) vellum, or semi-rough.

Neoimpressionism A movement initiated mainly by Seurat in the 1880s, combining his vivid color technique with strictly formal composition. See also **pointillism**.

Pastel A medium consisting of dry 'powdered' color mixed with just enough gum (usually gum arabic), to bind it. It is set in moulds, and formed thus into fragile sticks.

Pointillism Broken color technique, sometimes called color scintillation, is based on the principle that all colors are derived from the three primary colors. Therefore in order to arrive at any wanted color one merely needs to apply little spots of the component colors side by side on the paper, rather than mixing them together on the palette, letting the eyes of the viewer do the mixing. The effect is that of atmosphere and light.

Primary colors The three colors—red, blue, yellow—from which, in theory, all other colors can be obtained.

Scratchboard Also called scraperboard. Card covered with a layer of china clay. The design is first drawn on directly with pen or brush with black India ink or gouache color, then sharp tools are used to scratch or scrape over the surface as desired. In black and white, the end result resembles lino or wood-cut technique.

Secondary colors These are obtained by the mixing of two primaries, e.g. green and orange.

Sepia A brown pigment, made from cuttlefish.

Shade Any degree of a color darkened with black.

Stippling A technique using hundreds of tiny dots and flecks, giving the effect of light and shade.

Tempera This word really means any kind of binder which will serve to 'temper' powder color and make it workable.

Tertiary colors These colors are obtained by the mixing of three primaries.

Tint Any degree of a color lightened by adding white.

Texture The touch value of a surface area. There are *two* types of textures: *a* actual, and *b* simulated. *a* possesses real physical touch values, i.e.—sandpaper or watercolor paper surfaces, and *b* possesses a synthetic texture gained by decorative effects of color, pattern, tone and line.

Tone See also **values**. Tone may be used also as a key, as in music. *Major key* = one which has a *great interval* in contrast. *Minor key* = has a *small interval* in its contrast. *High Major Tonal Scheme* = one in which most tones are *high* or *light*, with a contrast of *very dark*. *Low Major Tonal Scheme* = one in which tonal scheme is mainly *very dark*—with contrast of *very light*. *High Minor Tonal Scheme* = *very light* tones, with its contrast coming from the *low*. *Low Minor Tonal Scheme* = mainly *dark*, with contrast coming from the *high*.

Values These are the gradations of tone from light to dark, observable in any solid object under the play of light. Tonal values are independent of local color, and are best perceived by half-closing the eyes, so that effects of color are diminished.

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Born in Warwick, Queensland in 1923, Yvonne du Moulin studied at the East Sydney Technical College under William Dobell and G.K. Townshend. She was elected member of Australian Watercolor Institute in 1950 (the youngest member ever elected) and is a Foundation member of the Art Gallery of New South Wales. She has been art teacher and lecturer in Department of Education Secondary Schools and Evening Colleges in New South Wales since 1961.

Her work was included in the watercolors sent from Australia for the American Watercolor Society 108th Exhibition in the National Academy Galleries, New York 1975. Her work has been exhibited widely throughout Australia and New Zealand and is in collections in Australia, USA, UK, and Europe. Her late husband, Arthur John Nicol, was a leading artist on the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Bulletin* and was also a member of the Australian Watercolor Institute.



VAN NOSTRAND REINHOLD COMPANY
NEW YORK CINCINNATI TORONTO LONDON MELBOURNE

ISBN 0-442-21876-1